JH Milnes, Hartcliff Road, Penistone

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report Ref. ER-7738-01

27/08/2024

JH Milnes Ltd

Report reference	**ER-7738-01 - PRA**
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Report duration	In accordance with CIEEM (2019), unless otherwise stated the findings of this report remain valid for a period of 18 months. After this period advice should be sought on the scope of any updating work required.

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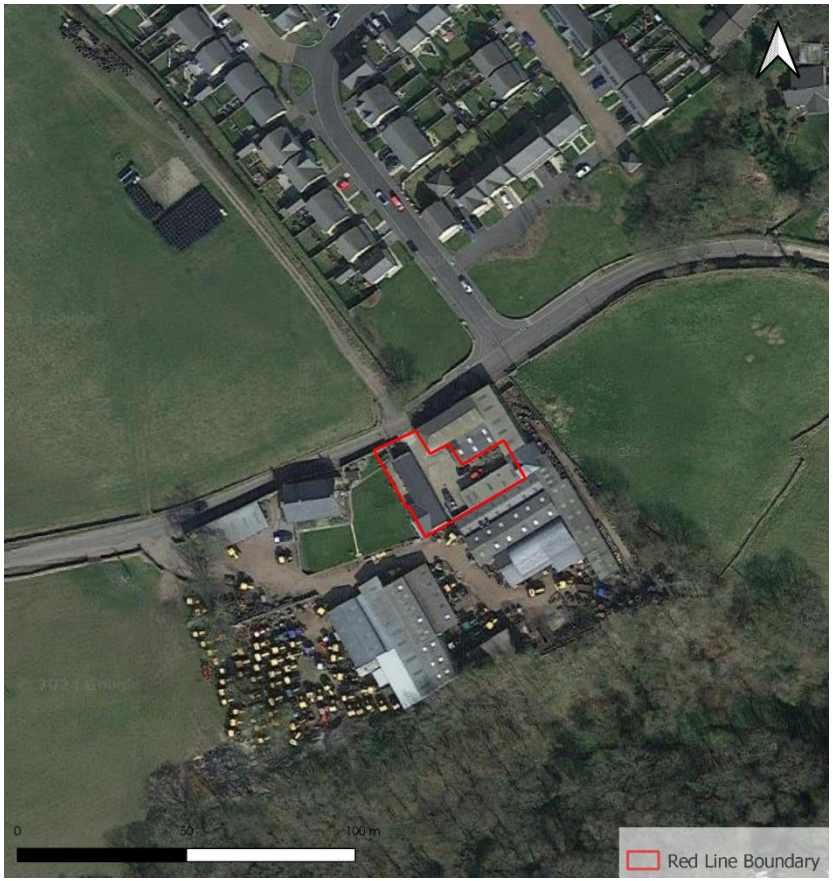
Summary Statement

The Site has been found to support of buildings of Low suitability to support roosting bats and a single further emergence survey has been recommended to confirm the presence or absence of roosts in line with guidance.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological was commissioned by JH Milnes Ltd to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at JH Milnes, Hartcliff Road, Peniston (SE 24168 02502).
2. The application site, 'the Site', comprises a small farmyard with building
3. Proposals are to convert the barn into an additional garage/ outbuilding and with a small extension to the existing dwelling.

Figure 1 The Site boundary (red line).



Method

4. A thorough daytime inspection of the site was made in July 2024 to look for evidence of bats and assess suitability for roosting. Evidence of bats may take the form of droppings, feeding remains, live bats, dead bats, stains on masonry or timber from the oils in bats' fur and claw marks made by bats regularly roosting in the same location.
5. Bat roosting potential of the building was classified according to the following criteria set out in Table 1, taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

Table 1 Bat Roosting Suitability of Buildings.

Suitability	Criteria
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

Box 1 *Bat roosts*

Bats roost in buildings and trees in different locations depending upon time of year and environmental factors such as position of the sun, proximity to heat sources and feeding grounds. The following types are commonly referred to:

Transitional roosts

Bats frequently gather early in the season (March to April) before dispersing to summer roosts. Bats can be found in high numbers in these roosts for a very short period. Transitional roosts can also be found shortly before hibernation in August to October when bats (depending upon species) can gather in roosts not used earlier in the season.

Maternity roosts

These are among the most important roosts and are normally occupied from May to August. Depending on the species involved, some maternity roosts can contain a very significant proportion of the local population.

Summer (non-breeding) roosts

Small groups of non-breeding female and male bats can gather in these roosts or bats from a local population may choose to roost individually. There are normally a large number of suitable locations for summer non-breeding roosts and these may be routinely used or used only on an occasional basis. Irregularly used summer roosts can be very hard to find without unreasonable survey effort.

Mating roosts

Around September bats will gather in roost to mate; these are often in different locations than summer or breeding roosts.

Hibernation roosts

As bats in hibernation roosts are highly vulnerable to disturbance and bats can be present in large numbers these are considered to be among the most important bat roosts. Many species of bats roost in large and nationally important hibernation roosts associated with underground sites, many of which are well known and protected. However, the most common bat in the UK (the common pipistrelle) is largely unaccounted for in winter but thought to disperse and roost individually or in small groups in thermally stable cracks and crevices in thick walls or trees.

Box 2 *Legal background*

Bats are afforded full protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) plus amendments, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under these Acts it is an offence among others, to recklessly kill, injure or disturb bats. It is also an offence to destroy or obstruct a roost even if bats are not in occupancy at the time of the action.

There are no defences against contravention of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which means that it is important for detailed and well-designed bat surveys to be carried out, prior to carrying out activities that may impact upon bat roosts such as demolition of buildings or removal of trees.

Where bats are found within a potential development site, a license from Natural England may need to be secured if works that could otherwise contravene legislation are to be carried out. These licences are only issued where Natural England is satisfied that works are unavoidable and would not have a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of bats. A Natural England license requires that the potential development site has full planning permission and that bats were a material consideration of the planning permission.

Records

6. The local records provider, in this case South Yorkshire Bat Group (WYBG), was asked to provide all records from within a 1km radius of the Site.

7. A number of records were returned, detailing two roosts and general sightings of a primarily common pipistrelle, with general bat records and lesser numbers of noctule, unidentified bat species and myotis species. The nearest roost record is of 40 pipistrelle species bats c. 200m from the Site and dated 2001.

National, regional, and local Status

8. The application Site lies within the natural range of 10 species of bat. These are summarised in Table 2 below, together with a note on each species' national status, relative abundance, and status within the 1km search area.

EPSM Licences

9. There are no European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences returned within 1km of the Site.

Table 2 List of bat species known to occur in South Yorkshire, ordered in increasing level of significance to their national population.

Species	National Status	Within 1km radius	
		Recorded	Roosts known
Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Common and increasing	Yes	Yes
Soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*	Common and stable	Yes	No
Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*	Common and increasing	-	-
Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*	Common and stable	-	-
Natterer's bat *M. nattereri*	Common and increasing	-	-
Whiskered bat *M. mystacinus*	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*	Uncommon but stable	Yes	No
Brandt's bat *M. brandtii*	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*	Uncommon and trend unknown	-	-
Nathusius' pipistrelle *P. nathusii*	Uncommon but stable	-	-

Site Context

10. The Site is located on the south western periphery of the small town of Penistone. As such residential housing and gardens is located to the east and north.

11. Immediately to the south is Coal Pitt Dike a small stream flowing roughly east and riparian woodland. Elsewhere the Site and Penistone, is set within a largely open pastoral landscape, with particularly further west an upland fringe feel.

Figure 2 Site context.

Survey Results

Building 1

13. Building 1, the existing house, has been subject to re-roofing and renovation works in recent years with new pointing between stone work and roof evident all of which are well sealed with only occasional gaps which would appear to small to support roosting. Additionally, the roof space appears to have been boarded out internally. Accordingly, there are negligible features apparent which would be suitable to support roosting bats.

Figure 3 Overview of building 1 with recent re-roofing and pointing apparent.

Building 2

14. A stone built barn/ outbuilding with a sheet metal roof supported by simple timber frame.

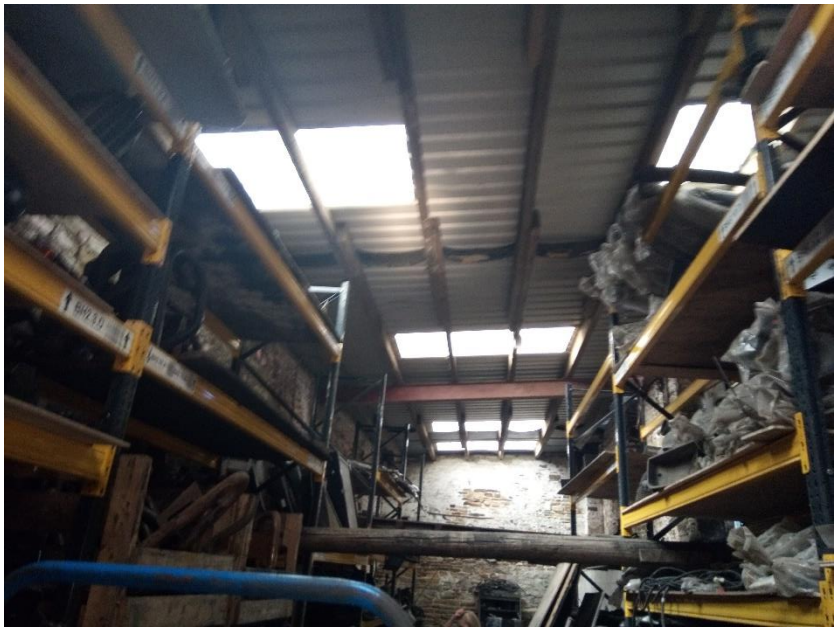
Figure 4 Northern elevation of building 2, with gaps around wall tops and metal roof with wooden frame evident.

15. There are multiple gaps in the stone walls where mortar is missing creating some gaps deep enough to support occasional roosting bats, though ultimately the walls are of a solid construction style or with a partial cavity, restricting opportunities to roost within to shallower gaps.

16. There are gaps at the wall tops where the roof and timber frame are not flush with the walls. Again these could offer some limited opportunities for roosting at the wall tops or inside the building though are generally considered to open and breezy to be of any higher roosting potential. Given the simple structure of the roof and internal timber frame roosting opportunities are limited simply to corners or around beams where present. Internal inspection did not reveal any evidence of roosting and the building is well lit and used as a parts store likely creating disturbance during the day.

17. The metal roof is likely to result in large temperature fluctuations internally again likely limiting roost potential, as is water ingress on the south western corner.

Figure 5 Showing inside of building 2



Summary

18. Based on the features present, building 1 has been assessed as offering Negligible roost suitability and building 2 of Low suitability.

Figure 6 Showing bat roost suitability of on-Site buildings.

Conclusions

19. Further survey of building 1 is not recommended but the presence of roosting bats cannot be ruled out in building 2 following day time inspection.

Recommendations

20. In line with best practice guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023), further survey should be carried out to establish if potential roost features are being used by bats. This should take the form of a single emergence survey. Surveys should be undertaken during the active bat survey season, which runs from May to August inclusive, with September providing sub-optimal conditions.

21. Should evidence of bats be found, and proposals will result in impacts to bats or their roosts, a mitigation licence from Natural England is likely to be required. Further survey would likely be necessary to support a licence application.

Standard precaution

22. Although no evidence of roosting has been found and likely absence of roosting has been concluded, it must be noted that bats frequently move between roost sites, can be very casual in their choice of roosting location, and can turn up unexpectedly at any time. On this basis the developer should always be mindful of bats as a potential constraint and have a protocol in place should any bats be seen or suspected during works: works should stop, a suitably licensed ecologist consulted, and their advice followed.

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