Brooks Ecological
Grounded advice

Bat Survey Report

Elsecar Heritage Centre

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Report Reference: ER-5592-02

12/07/2021

Report Title:	Bat Survey Report Elsecar Heritage Centre
Report Reference:	ER-5592-02
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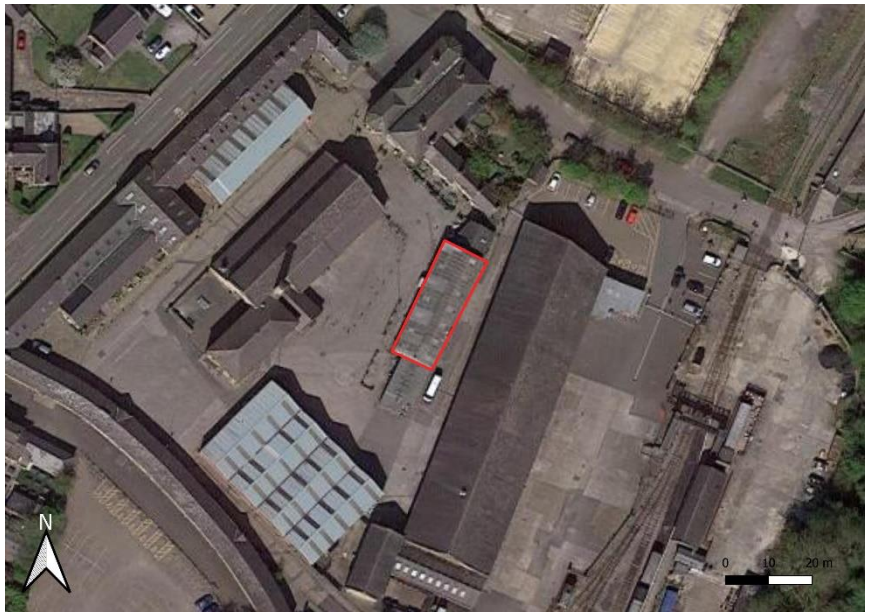
Summary Statement

Survey has confirmed the likely absence of roosting bats from all onsite buildings (units 15B-15G within the Elsecar Heritage Centre).

Introduction

1. Subsequent to recommendations set out in the Bat Roost Suitability Assessment Report (ER-5592-01), Brooks Ecological was commissioned to carry out a detailed Bat Emergence Survey at the Site of Elsecar Heritage Centre.
2. Survey was required on the building units 15B-15G, which were assessed as providing features with low bat roost suitability; see Figure 1 (below). In accordance with current best practice guidelines, buildings of low suitability need a single evening emergence or dawn re-entry survey in order to confirm the presence or likely absence of roosting bats.

Figure 1 The Site boundary



Method

3. Brooks Ecological specialise in bat surveys ranging from individual buildings through to complex sites requiring numerous visits with large teams. In terms of the survey effort, number of personnel and number of visits required to be able to properly evaluate the building(s) use by bats, we refer to the Bat Conservation Trust Survey Good Practice Guidelines (2016). However, these guidelines are not prescriptive, and we approach each site individually as required using our professional judgement and significant experience base.
4. In this case, a single visit with a team of three surveyors was deemed necessary to fully evaluate the potential use of the Site for roosting.
5. The survey was carried out with surveyors positioned around the building to cover all aspects where bats could potentially emerge or return, and to establish activity levels around the Site.
6. The surveyors, using heterodyne detectors, were in place at least 15 minutes before sunset and left once all species of bat would be expected to have left a roost and patterns of activity within the Site had been appraised. Conditions and dates are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Survey conditions.

Date	Survey Type	Temp. Start/End (°C)	Weather
01.07.2021	Emergence	17/14	Overcast (7/8 oktas), calm (0-1 beaufort), dry.

7. Survey and assessment was directed by Christopher Shaw BSc (Hons) MCIEEM. Chris has over 10 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys in a professional capacity and is registered to use the new Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2). He is an active member of the West Yorkshire Bat Group and West Yorkshire Bat Care Scheme.

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.

Survey Results

Survey 1

Emergence – 1st July 2021 (sunset 21:38)

8. This survey encompassed the single building on the Site, with surveyors positioned so as to cover all features with bat roost suitability.

9. Overall, bat activity was considered to be very low, with only a single bat contact being made during the survey. This was recorded at 22:34 when a noctule was heard, but not seen, flying high over the Site.

10. No roosts were identified, or suspected, within any part of the surveyed building.

Evaluation & Conclusion

11. Survey has demonstrated a likely absence of roosting within the on-site building and as such, the proposed works to replace the roof presents little risk of impacting upon bats or their roosts.

Standard precaution

12. Although no evidence or 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.

13. 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.

Enhancements

14. The NPPF puts emphasis on development delivering biodiversity enhancement, above and beyond mitigating or compensating for any impacts.

15. To this end, bat boxes for use by roosting bats should be installed as part of the proposed works, to offer suitable habitat in the long term.

References

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