

New House Farm (Outbuilding), Penistone

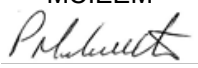
Bat Survey Report

15th February 2018



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Contents

1. Summary.....	2
2. Introduction	3
3. Habitat Assessment	3
4. Methodology.....	4
5. Results	5
6. Assessment.....	7
7. References.....	9

1. Summary

- 1.1.1 The bat survey was commissioned by planning consultant Mr James Roberts on behalf of the client Mr & Mrs Booth on 9th February 2018.
- 1.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform a planning application for renovation of an out-building and subsequent change of use to a holiday let.
- 1.1.3 The preliminary roost assessment survey was conducted on the 13th February 2018.
- 1.1.4 There were no visible signs of bat presence on either the inside or outside of the surveyed building. The building displays a moderate number and diversity of roost features and therefore was assessed as offering a moderate level of bat roost potential.
- 1.1.5 In order to confidently determine the presence/absence of roosting bats, two nocturnal surveys should be undertaken during the bat activity period (peak period: May-August).

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 The bat survey was commissioned by planning consultant Mr James Roberts on behalf of the client Mr & Mrs Booth on 9th February 2018. The proposals are for the renovation of an out-building and subsequent change of use to a holiday let.
- 2.1.2 The site comprises a small detached single storey stone built out-building. Middleton Bell Ecology were contracted initially to conduct a baseline assessment to determine the likely presence or absence of roosting bats and to identify roost locations, access points, species present, level of use and the importance of nearby landscape features.
- 2.1.3 The out-building at New House Farm is located in a rural location and lies approximately 500m east of Cubley.

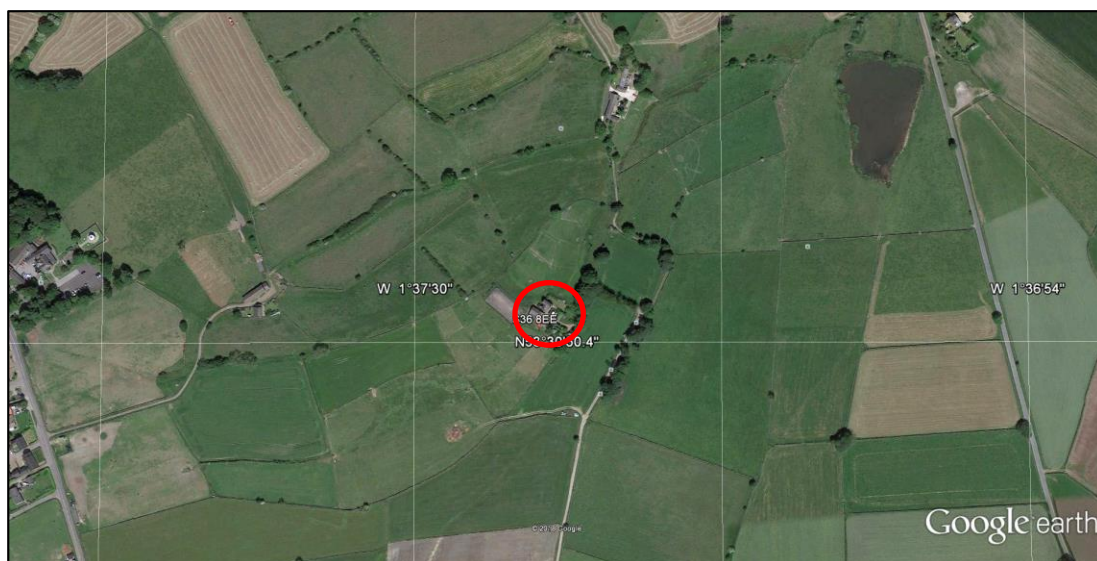
3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The surrounding area consists predominantly of grassland. The surrounding area lacks much higher quality foraging habitat and therefore species present are likely to be restricted to common and widespread species.
- 3.1.1 Table 1 summarises the habitats present, adjacent to and further afield of the surveyed building.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: New House Farm, off Oxspring Road, Penistone S36 8EE			
OS Grid Ref. SE 2512 0201		Altitude. 243m	
Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓	✓	Farm house and large stone barn displaying high roost potential
River bordered by trees			River Don 1.4km northeast
Standing water			Castle Dam 360m northeast
Bridges tunnels and culverts			Associated with River Don
Trees	✓	✓	Mature trees along access track to farm
Woodland			Nearest woodland adjacent to River Don 1.3km northeast
Grassland	✓	✓	Extensive grassland

Figure 1. Site location, as indicated by red circle



3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the following:

- The presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Potential roosting areas and access/egress points into structure.
- Determine the level of bat roost potential associated with the structure.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 Bat records were requested from South Yorkshire Bat Group (SYBG) for locations within a 2km radius of the site. A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was undertaken to identify historic European Protected Species (EPS) licences obtained for locations within 2km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

4.2.1 The following personnel conducted the survey on 13th February 2018:

- Peter Middleton (MCIEEM; Class license WML-A34-Level 4, 2017-27977-CLS-CLS)

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the surveys in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2016):

- A brief inspection and assessment of the site and habitats present to within 300m.

- An extensive examination of all parts of the building both inside and out to record structural features and condition and to record features that may be suitable for roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps between beams and joists and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below beams, among a number of other factors. All signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
- An assessment of the building's bat roost potential (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

4.2.3 The following equipment was used or at hand during the survey:

- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders
- Camera

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No significant limitations to the survey were encountered.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 South Yorkshire Bat Group provided 75 records of five species including common and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *P. pygmaeus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri* and whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*. The nearest confirmed roost was occupied by an unknown species of bat and is located 0.73km north of the site.

5.1.2 No historical bat EPS mitigation licences have been issued for locations within 2km of the surveyed building.

5.2 Field Survey

5.2.1 No evidence of bat roosting was recorded on site. The building displays a moderate number and diversity of bat features resulting an overall moderate level of bat roost potential. The features are described in detail below.

Description

5.2.2 The surveyed building comprises an old rectangular single storey detached stone built out-building on a south-southwest to north-northeast axis. The building is small with three doorways which lead to three small separate compartments beneath a pitched York stone/grey slate roof (see Plates 1, 2 & 3). The out-building is part of a complex of buildings including a dwelling, large barn and derelict (former) farm house, all of which offer bat roost potential.

5.2.3 Land surrounding the surveyed building includes hard surface and an area of rank grassland and tall ruderal vegetation of low ecological value. The latter comprises

mostly species indicative of high nutrient levels including nettle *Urtica dioica* and cleavers *Gallium aparine*.

External inspection

- 5.2.4 The buildings masonry offers potential access to the rubble filled core of the walls in at least 15 locations (mainly on the east-southeast elevation). There is also potential access to the wall top on both side together with a York stone slate roof which offers a plethora of potential access locations to the void between slates and membrane.

Plate 1. South-southwest gable



Plate 2. North-northeast gable



Internal inspection

- 5.2.5 The inside is open to the underside of the roof which has been constructed in the traditional way with purlins. There is a plastic membrane (not breathable) beneath the

slates and the compartments at either end comprise plywood sarking. Wood boards supporting cycle hangers display a feature (gap behind) with potential to accommodate bats (see Plate 3).

Plate 3. Inside of one of the end compartments



Inspection of large barn

- 5.2.6 For completeness, a large two storey stone built adjacent barn with a pitched York stone slate roof was internally and externally inspected for its bat roost potential. The barn has 1F bitumen membrane beneath the slates and the roof-space was found to be extremely cobwebby. The masonry of the external walls display features with potential to accommodate bats and there is anecdotal evidence from the owner of the site that there is a bat roost in the external wall below a window sill opposite the surveyed building.

6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 No bats were found roosting in the building during the preliminary daytime assessment and there were no signs of bat occupation. The building displays a moderate number and diversity of roost features and consequently was assessed as offering an overall moderate level of bat roost potential.
- 6.1.2 The assessment of moderate potential is considered to be an accurate determination of the roost potential of the surveyed building.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

- 6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 6.2.2 It is an offence to:
- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection, or obstruct access to any such place.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
- Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.

6.2.3 The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.

6.2.4 In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, “to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. It notes that “conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat”. Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein’s *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bats are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.

6.2.5 Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats, the site must either be registered on the Bat Low Impact Class Licence (BLICL) or a European Protected Species (EPS) license must first be obtained from Natural England. This requirement applies even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.

6.2.6 NPPF: 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils.
- Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services.
- 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 that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

6.3 Recommendations/enhancements/further survey

6.3.1 It compliance with bat survey good practice guidelines (Collins 2016) and in order to confidently determine the presence/absence of roosting bats, it is recommended that the building is subject to two nocturnal surveys. The initial dusk nocturnal survey should be undertaken by a team of two surveyors, with the second survey (dawn) undertaken by a single surveyor. The two surveys should be separated by an interval of at least two weeks during the bat activity period (peak period: May-August).

6.3.2 At this stage, it is not possible to determine the requirement for any bat mitigation or compensation as the confident presence/absence of roosting bats has not yet been determined.

6.4 Conclusion

- 6.4.1 There were no visible signs of bat occupation on either the inside or outside of the surveyed building. The building displays a moderate number and diversity of roost features and consequently was considered to offer a moderate level of bat roost potential overall.
- 6.4.2 In order to confidently determine the presence/absence of roosting bats, it is advised that a two summer nocturnal surveys are undertaken

7. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. The Bat Conservation Trust.