# Belle Green Court Care Home, Cudworth

# Bat Survey Report

# 24th January 2024

**Prepared by:**

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## Disclaimer

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## 1. Summary

1.1.1 A bat survey of Belle Green Court Care Home and the adjacent cinema (Rock House) (was commissioned by Architect Paul Ingle on behalf of the client Gurjeevvan Shergill on 8th December 2023. The survey was undertaken to inform the demolition of the cinema and the extension and remodelling of the existing care home. The site was located on Belle Green Lane, in the centre of Cudworth, South Yorkshire.

1.1.2 The care home dated from 1998 and the cinema dated from the 1920s. The care home was located in the north of the site and the cinema at the southern end.

1.1.3 The care home was in good condition, the only potential bat roost features were gaps behind flashing on the parapet walls at the western gable ends. However, this flashing was located over lead soakers and therefore overall, these features were considered to be of negligible suitability for use by bats. The building was warm and dry.

1.1.4 A few cracks were present within the brickwork of the cinema – mostly located at a low level, and gaps were present above roller doors and via a barred window which would potentially allow bats access into the building, however the interior of the building held no particularly suitable roost features, the flat roof was leaking and very wet.

1.1.5 No bats or signs of bats were recorded in either building and the suitability of both was considered to be negligible.

1.1.6 The trees present within the site were considered unsuitable for use by roosting bats but were likely to be used by nesting birds.

1.1.7 It is recommended that vegetation clearance / demolition takes place outside the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive). If this is not possible a nesting bird check should be completed by an experienced ecologist within 48 hours of the work commencing.

1.1.8 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, opportunities for enhancement should be included in the proposed development. The enhancement measures should comprise the installation of one integrated bat box, one swift brick, and one bee brick within the new development. Suitable locations for these boxes have been provided.

1.1.9 The survey identified that the buildings on site had negligible suitability to support roosting bats, but a single bat can roost almost anywhere, so care should be taken during the demolition. In the event an unexpected bat is found during work, the work in that area should cease and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for further advice.

1.1.10 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 12 months from the survey date.

## 2. Introduction

2.1.1 A bat survey of Belle Green Court Care Home and the adjacent cinema (Rock House) was commissioned by Architect Paul Ingle on behalf of the client Gurjeevvan Shergill on 8th December 2023. The survey was undertaken to inform the demolition of the cinema and the extension and remodelling of the existing care home. The site was located on Belle Green Lane, in the centre of Cudworth, South Yorkshire.

2.1.2 The preliminary roost assessment was conducted on 11th January 2024. The survey aimed to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats and, if present, the roost locations, potential access points, species present, and the level of use, where possible.

2.1.3 The legislative context to the survey and assessment reported here is included in Appendix 1.

## 3. Habitat Assessment

3.1.1 The immediate surrounding area consisted of residential dwellings and associated gardens, plus a few shops. On the edge of the village the land was predominantly arable farmland (Figure 1).

3.1.2 The habitat was considered to be slightly below average in terms of its suitability for use by bats, with a substantial amount of lighting present in the area reducing the suitability for light sensitive species such as brown long-eared bats. The abundance and variety of light-tolerant bat species was considered likely to be moderate with light sensitive species unlikely to be present. Table 1 summarises the habitats present within, and adjacent to Belle Green Court Care Home.

**Table 1. Location and habitat table**

| **Name and address: Belle Green Court Care Home, Belle Green Lane, Cudworth, South Yorkshire, S72 8LL** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OS Grid Ref. SE 38965 09315 | | Altitude. 74 m | |
| Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Council | | | |
| Features on site and adjacent to site | | | |
| Feature | On site | Adjacent | Comments |
| Buildings | ✔ | ✔ | The home and derelict cinema. |
| Watercourse bordered by trees | | | None. |
| Standing water | | | None. |
| Bridges tunnels and culverts | | | None. |
| Trees | | ✔ | Mature trees were present in the grounds. |
| Woodland | | | None. |
| Grassland | ✔ | ✔ | Lawns and communal amenity grassland were located within the site and nearby properties. |

**Figure 1. Site location, outlined red**


## 3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the:

- Presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Potential roosting areas and roost access/egress points.
- Level of bat roost suitability associated with the buildings.
- Further survey work or mitigation requirements.

## 4. Methodology

## 4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 A desk study was undertaken with Barnsley Biological Records Centre and South Yorkshire Bat Group to request bat records for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.1.2 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 2 km of the site.

## 4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

4.2.1 The survey of the building was conducted on 11th January 2024 by Greg Slack (MCIEEM; Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2017-28068-CLS-CLS).

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the survey:

- An extensive examination of all parts of the survey area to record structural features and condition, and features that may be suitable for use by roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any holes, crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps/holes in cladding and soffits and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below features.

- Any 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 buildings' bat roost suitability (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

4.2.3 The following equipment was used during the survey:

- a clulight;
- binoculars;
- an endoscope;
- ladders; and
- a camera.

## 4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 Water damage in the former cinema building had caused part of the first floor (and ceiling) to rot making much of this area unsafe to stand on. The majority of the space could however be viewed from safely accessible areas.

# 5. Results

## 5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 Barnsley Biological Records Centre provided 163 bat records for locations within a 2 km radius. Species positively identified in the data consultation comprised common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus p*ipistrellus, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*. Additional records of unidentified *Pipistrellus*, *Nyctalus* species, and unidentified bat species were also provided.

5.1.2 South Yorkshire Bat Group provided 43 bat records for locations within a 2km radius of the site. Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* was the only additional species positively identified in the data consultation.

5.1.3 The nearest record was a common pipistrelle day roost (three bats) recorded in 2008 approximately 240 m to the west of the site. This roost was subsequently destroyed under EPS licence (EPSM2009-532).

5.1.4 No other bat EPS mitigation licences within 2 km of the site were identified during the search of the MAGIC website.

## 5.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

5.2.1 The care home dated from 1998 and the cinema dated from the 1920s. The care home was located in the north of the site and the cinema at the southern end.

5.2.2 The care home was in good condition, the only potential bat roost features were gaps behind roofing felt on the parapet walls at the western gable ends. However, the felt was located over lead flashing and therefore overall, these features were considered to be of negligible suitability. The building was warm and dry.

5.2.3 A few cracks were present within the brickwork of the cinema – mostly located at a low level, and gaps were present above roller doors and via a barred window which would potentially allow bats access into the building, however the interior of the building held no particularly suitable roost features, the flat roof was leaking and very wet.

5.2.4 No bats or signs of bats were recorded in either building and the suitability of both was considered to be negligible.

5.2.5 The trees present within the site were considered unsuitable for use by roosting bats but were likely to be used by nesting birds.

*Building description – care home*

5.2.6 The care home was a brick-built building with a multi-pitched roof. The building was built in a 'J' shape with a hipped roof at the southeast, and northeast corners and gables present at the two western ends (Plate 1). The gables had a small parapet covering most of the end of the roof with a gap at the apex where the mortared verge could be seen (Plate 2). The roof was covered with interlocking concrete tiles. Valleys were lined with lead. Soffit boxes were present, they included a ventilation strip along the outer edge of the base which was lined with insect mesh.

5.2.7 The windows were framed with uPVC.

**Plate 1. Google Earth birds eye view of the care home (left) and cinema (right) viewed from the west**

**Plate 2. The southern elevation and southernmost gable of the care home**

5.2.8 The garden of the care home included semi-mature trees along Barnsley Road to the west and semi-mature shrubs in the centre of a patio area for residents which was sheltered to the north, east and south by the building (Plate 3). A line of Leyland cypress Cupressus × leylandii was also present along the eastern end of the former cinema.

**Plate 3. Semi-mature trees along the western site boundary**

*External inspection – care home*

5.2.9 The only potential bat roost feature identified on the care home were lose flashing on the back of the parapet walls on the gables. The potential roost features (PRFs) are shown in Table 3 and Figure 3 below.

**Table 3. Potential Roost Features (PRF) Recorded**

| PRF | Photo | Description |
|---|---|---|
| A |  | Gap beneath flashing on the back of the gable parapets. |

5.2.10 While it is acknowledged that loose flashing in this sort of location can occasionally be used by roosting bats, it was considered that the lead soakers behind and below the flashing significantly reduced its suitability. Overall, these features were considered to be of negligible suitability.

**Figure 3. PRF Locations**


*Internal inspection – care home*

5.2.11 The roof voids were approximately 3 m high and supported by modern prefabricated 'W' trusses (Plate 4). The tiles were backed by Type 1F bitumen felt. A small amount of damage to the felt was present below the valley at the southern end of the building but the lead within the valley appeared to be sufficiently tight to the tiles to prevent any access for bats.

5.2.12 Approximately 300 mm of insulation was present above the ceilings. No bats or signs of bat activity were recorded.

**Plate 4. A typical roof void**

*Building description – former cinema*

5.2.13 The former cinema was a brick-built building with a flat roof. The roof was covered with

roofing felt. Parapet walls surrounded the roof. A single storey foyer was present on the front of the building. This section also had a flat roof (Plate 5).

**Plate 5. The façade of the former cinema (viewed from the west)**


5.2.14 The windows were framed with wood and mostly boarded up. The doors had metal roller door shutters with the original wooden doors behind.

*External inspection – former cinema*

5.2.15 The potential bat roost features identified on the former cinema were gaps over the metal roller doors, cracks in brickwork, and an open, barred window. The potential roost features (PRFs) are shown in Table 4 below and Figure 3 above.

**Table 4. Potential Roost Features (PRF) recorded on the former cinema**

| PRF | Photo | Description |
|---|---|---|
| B |  | Cracks in the brickwork. The crack on the northern side of the building (pictured) was at a height of approximately 3 m, the cracks on the southern elevation were all at low level – approximately 1m. |
| C |  | Gaps above roller doors. |

| PRF | Photo | Description |
|---|---|---|
| D |  | Open, barred window leading into the former cinema building. |

5.2.16 The crack in the brickwork pictured as PRF B in Table 4 was checked with binoculars and a high powered cluelight torch and considered to have been thoroughly checked, the other low-level cracks in the brick work were inspected thoroughly at close range with a torch and endoscope.

5.2.17 PRFs C and D allowed bats access into the building but did not provide a suitable roost in themselves.

*Internal inspection – former cinema*

5.2.18 The interior of the building was very wet. The ceiling had been damaged and in places the plaster had fallen off exposing the laths above (Plate 6). The roof was constructed from concrete and the internal floors included steel and wooden beams. The foyer at the front of the building had a suspended ceiling which had almost entirely fallen down (Plate 7). Hanging cobwebs were present in that area.

**Plate 6. damaged ceiling with laths (circled red) visible**

**Plate 7. The foyer with very few suspended ceiling tiles remaining and hanging cobwebs shown**

5.2.19 Although rotten flooring and ceiling meant that health and safety concerns prevented access onto the platform (shown in Plate 6), the space could be viewed relatively clearly from the safely accessible areas and the white painted walls meant that it was considered relatively likely that any droppings on the walls in these inaccessible locations would have been recorded.

5.2.20 A false ceiling was present below the concrete roof. No access into this roof space was possible (no hatch was present) but the structure of the building could be seen from the areas of damage.

## 6. Assessment

### 6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

6.1.1 The PRFs on the care home were located on the western gables. These features are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed works. The PRFs on the former cinema were considered to be of negligible suitability to be used by roosting bats. The cracks in the brickwork narrowed quickly and were mostly located at a low level. The barred open window and the gaps above the roller doors potentially allowed bats into the interior of the building but no signs of bat presence were visible and it is considered likely that bat droppings on walls would have been present if bats were using the interior of the building.

6.1.2 In conjunction with the location of the building it is considered that both buildings had negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

### 6.2 Further Survey, Recommendations and Enhancements

6.2.1 No further survey or mitigation is considered necessary for bats.

6.2.2 It is recommended that vegetation clearance / demolition takes place outside the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive). If this is not possible a nesting bird check should be completed by an experienced ecologist within 48 hours of the work commencing.

6.2.3 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, opportunities for enhancement should be included in the proposed development (as detailed in Appendix 1). The enhancement measures should comprise the installation of one integrated bat box, one swift brick, and one bee brick within the new development.

6.2.4 The integrated bat box and bee brick should be installed at the southern end of the building. The integrated swift brick should be installed on the western elevation of the new building. Suitable locations for the boxes are shown in Appendix 2.

## 6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 The survey identified that the buildings on site had negligible suitability to support roosting bats but a single bat can roost almost anywhere, so care should be taken during the demolition. In the event an unexpected bat is found during work, the work in that area should cease and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for further advice.

6.3.2 The nesting bird mitigation will ensure no active nests are impacted by the proposed works (the only likely protected or notable species identified within the site), and the enhancement measures will slightly improve the biodiversity opportunities within the new building.

6.3.3 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 12 months from the survey date.

## 7. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. The Bat Conservation Trust.

## Appendix 1. Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

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.

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.

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 bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* 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.

Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2021. This document states that plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended

by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2021. This document states that plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

## Appendix 2. Suitable bat, bird, and bee box locations

**Plate A2.1 Bat box and bee brick locations on the south of the new building**

Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box to be installed near the wall top and faced with timber cladding.

Photo: Lyndon Roberts (Alar Ecology)


A solitary bee brick to be installed on the south elevation at a height of at least 1m, in a sunny location.

**Plate A2.2 Swift box location on the west of the new building**