

Brooks

Ecological

*Grounded advice*

MCMXXIII

BARNESLEY  
1915  
GOLDIE  
M

DearnePlayhouse

**Bat Roost Suitability Assessment**

**Dearne Playhouse, Washington Road**

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Report Reference: ER-5873-01

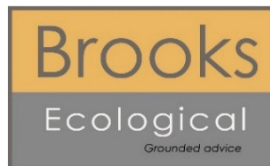
16/12/2021

---

Report Title:	Bat Roost Suitability Assessment Dearne Playhouse, Washington Road
Report Reference:	ER-5873-01
Written by:	David Lovett MBiolSci (Hons) ACIEEM Ecologist
Technical Review:	Rob Weston BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM Technical Director
QA:	Christopher Shaw BSc (Hons) MCIEEM Senior Ecologist
Approved for Issue:	Rob Weston BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM Technical Director
Date:	16/12/2021

---

*Brooks Ecological Ltd has prepared this report for the sole use of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The information which we have prepared and provided is in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions. This report does not constitute legal advice. The report is in accordance with the agreement under which our services were performed. No warranty, express or implied, is made as to the advice in this report or any other service provided by us. This report may not be relied upon by any other party except the person, company, agent or any third party for whom the report is intended without the prior written permission of Brooks Ecological Ltd. This report presents a snapshot of the site at the date it was surveyed; the conditions and the species recorded present, or likely absent, can change rapidly. Resurvey is recommended to any third-party seeking reliance on this report. The content of this report may, in part, be based upon information provided by others and on the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested. Information obtained from any third party has not been independently verified by Brooks unless otherwise stated in the report. This report is the copyright of Brooks Ecological Ltd. Unauthorised reproduction or usage by any person is prohibited.*



Unit A, 1 Station Road, Guiseley,  
Leeds, LS20 8BX  
**01943 884451**  
[admin@brooks-ecological.co.uk](mailto:admin@brooks-ecological.co.uk)  
[www.brooks-ecological.co.uk](http://www.brooks-ecological.co.uk)  
Registered in England Number 5351418



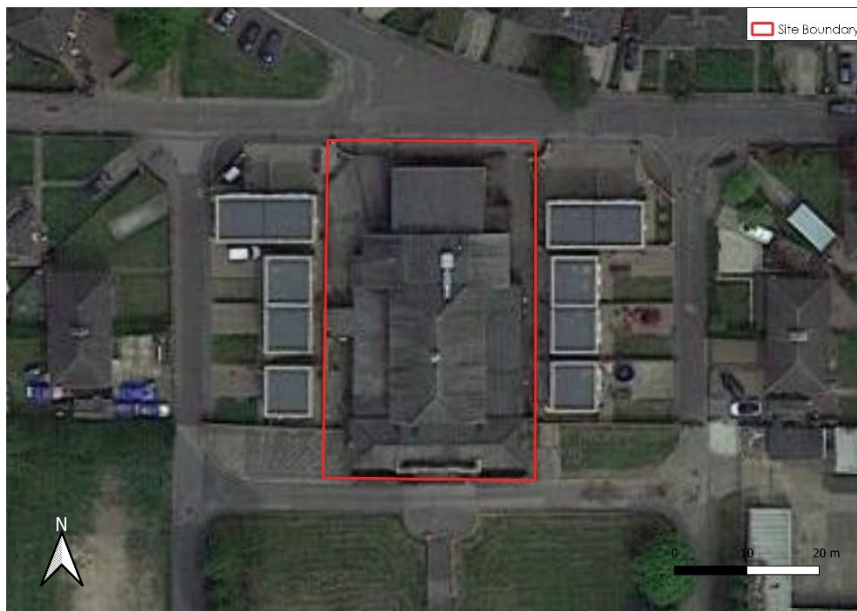
## Summary Statement

Survey has assessed the Dearne Playhouse as providing moderate bat roost suitability. In line with guidance, two nocturnal surveys are recommended to confirm the status of roosting bats within the building. These can be carried out from May-August 2022.

## Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological was commissioned by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to carry out a bat roost suitability assessment at Dearne Playhouse (grid reference SE 4582 0383).
2. The application site, 'the Site', comprises a single large detached property, with a complex multi-level roof structure, used as a theatre.
3. Proposals are to refurbish and upgrade the existing roof which is nearly 100 years old.

**Figure 1** The Site boundary (red line).



## Method

4. A thorough daytime inspection of the site was made in December 2021 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 (2016).

**Table 1** Bat Roosting Suitability of Buildings and Trees.

Suitability	Criteria
<i>Negligible</i>	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
<i>Low</i>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. 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 a larger number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used 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 - the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
<i>High</i>	A structure or tree 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, protections, conditions and surrounding habitats.

6. Surveys were directed by Rob Weston BSc (Hons) MSc MIEEM. Rob is a Registered Consultant (RC065) under the Bats Low Impact Class License and is registered to use the Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Level 2)

**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.

## Site Context

- The Site is located within Goldthorpe, a town situated between Barnsley and Doncaster. The Site itself is bordered to the north and east by residential areas, with urban greenspace to the west and south.
- The wider landscape includes a railway line approximately 200m to the west, functionally linked by trees and gardens. Bolton Pond fisheries and Far Moor Dike to the south of the Site provide good foraging habitat, as well as connectivity to other parts of the landscape.
- Beyond the edge of Goldthorpe, farmland extends to the south-east, ultimately reaching the Dearne River valley.

Figure 2 Site context.



## Records

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

- A total of 41 records were returned for the search area, seven of which relate to roosting bats. The closest record relates to an unidentified bat species seen approximately 550m to the east of the Site.

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

Species	National Status	Within 1km radius	
		Recorded	Roosts known
Common pipistrelles <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common and increasing	Yes	Yes
Soprano pipistrelle <i>P. pygmaeus</i>	Common and stable	Yes	-
Daubenton's <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Common and increasing	Yes	-
Brown long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Common and stable	-	-
Natterer's <i>M. nattereri</i>	Common and increasing	-	-
Whiskered <i>M. mystacinus</i>	Uncommon but stable	Yes	-
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Uncommon but stable	Yes	Yes
Brandt's <i>M. brandtii</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-
Leisler's <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Uncommon and trend unknown	Yes	-
Nathusius' Pipistrelle <i>P. nathusii</i>	Uncommon but stable	-	-

### National, regional and local Status

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

### EPSM Licences

No granted European Protected Species Mitigation licences are shown on Magic Map within 1km of the Site.

## Survey Results

13. The survey encompassed the entire Playhouse building, which includes the main pitched tiled roof, as well as adjoining flat-roofed extensions along the sides and rear of the building.

**Figure 3** General view of the building on site.



14. The Playhouse building has a complex series of multi-level roofs, with a main central hall and several extensions. A decorative entrance is also included at the southern elevation.
15. The building is constructed from red brick, with tiled roofs of hipped design, whilst the areas of flat roof are covered by felt.
16. Throughout the building external structure, masonry is a good condition, with no missing mortar noted and no damaged bricks.
17. In general, the roofs are also in good condition, though some areas were found to contain features that could be used by roosting bats. On the

eastern elevation, an area of flat roof, the fascia has come away from the wall and the roof felt, creating a gap behind it.

18. Some slipped and damaged tiles are present however, predominantly on the single storey south-west and south-east blocks.

**Figure 4** Showing raised tiles on the south-west corner of the building



19. The guttering, fascias and soffits were found to be well maintained. Some of the fittings have been recently installed, with no signs of wear noted. Others, such as along the east and west side of the main hall have been damaged by water (Figure 5). A soffit end is in poor condition at the south-west corner as well, with small gaps present between the brick and wood (Figure 6). These gaps may allow access behind the wooden fittings, creating cavities that could be used by small numbers of roosting bats.
20. A small section of guttering, fascia and soffit at the south-east corner of the building is worn, with gaps visible behind the wood fittings. These crevices could also be used by roosting bats.
21. A section of fascia on the northern side of the main hall is also in poor condition, with gaps possibly present between it and the wall.

**Figure 5** Showing water damaged wooden fittings on the east side of the building



**Figure 6** Showing small section of worn fittings with gaps between them and the wall



**Figure 7** Showing damaged wooden fittings on the north side of the building



22. At the front of the building, the decorative entrance stonework has suffered from erosion, creating several gaps between the individual stones, which could be used by roosting bats (Figure 8).
23. Around the edges of the sandstone entrance feature, there are gaps present where flashing has lifted up (Figure 9). Bats could potentially roost between the flashing and the roof files underneath.
24. The chimney and bell tower were found to be in good condition, with no potential roost features recorded in association them.

**Figure 8** Showing damaged stonework within the entrance feature



**Figure 9** Showing raised flashing around the sandstone entrance



## Constraints

25. The nature of the building's construction, with several different roof heights and type, as well as the presence of private residences along both the east and west sides of the building meant that it was not possible to view the entirety of the structure.
26. However, given the overall condition of the building, it is unlikely that a potential feature were missed that would otherwise change the overall suitability of the structure.

## Conclusion & Recommendations

27. Based on the features present, the Dearne Playhouse is assessed as having moderate suitability for roosting bats and, further detailed survey is recommended in order to ascertain the status of roosting bats.
28. In line with best practice guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016), further survey should take the form of two nocturnal surveys; either dusk emergence or dawn re-entry surveys. These surveys should be undertaken during the main active bat season, which runs from May to August inclusive, with September providing sub-optimal conditions.
29. If evidence of roosting bats is identified during the further survey work, a mitigation licence from Natural England may be required to derogate any offences in relation to disturbing bats or damaging or destroying roosts. Further survey may be required in support of a licence application. Natural England licences cannot be secured until the necessary permission are in place.

### Nesting Birds

30. Nesting birds such as pied wagtails, house sparrows and swallows may make use of the building as nesting sites. To prevent the works impacting on nesting birds, any works should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season, which is 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August.
31. Any works required during the breeding season should be preceded by a nesting bird survey to ensure that the law is not contravened through the destruction of nests and that any active nests are identified and adequately protected.

## References

Bat Conservation Trust (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines*

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made>

English Nature (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

JNCC (2004) *The Bat Workers Manual*. Third Edition.

ODPM circular 06/05 (2005) *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System*  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/circularbiodiversity>