



**LAKESIDE VIEW, BLACKER GREEN LANE,
SILKSTONE.**

OS REF: SE 285 046.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: 200614.

Date: 2nd June 2020.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION.	3
2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.	4
3. SURVEY RESULTS.	5
4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.	12
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.	13
6. REFERENCES.	15
Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.	16
Appendix II. BAT TOOLBOX TALK.	18

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to convert an outbuilding into a bungalow dwelling at Lakeside View on Blacker Green Lane at Silkstone. This will involve remove a select number of roof tiles to install sky lights and installation of new and additional doors and windows. All remaining works will be internal.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to carry out a bat survey of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. This survey was carried out on 2nd June 2020 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendix I of this report provides additional information on bats and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The buildings were thoroughly checked internally and externally for potential bat roosting sites by looking for the following signs: -

- * Holes, cracks, or crevices.
- * Bat droppings.
- * Prey remains.
- * Staining on external walls.

2.2. Unless otherwise stated, all lofts were accessed and inspected using a high-powered torch and where necessary an endoscope.

2.3. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings in the roof and ridge tiles, behind soffits and fascia's and in the walls of the structure for suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.4. All window cills, walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety. Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.5. All survey work was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)*, with an assessment of the buildings suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.6. This survey was a daytime assessment survey only and no bat dusk emergence or dawn swarming surveys were carried out.

2.7. This survey was carried out by Ruth Georgiou BSc MCIEEM. Since 2004 Ruth has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out ecology surveys and phase I habitat surveys. As a full member of CIEEM Ruth is subject to peer review on an annual basis. Ruth holds Natural England survey licences in respect of bats, great crested newts and white clawed crayfish and has held her own or has been named ecologist on site specific licences for badgers, great crested newts and bats. She also holds a degree in Environmental Science (BSc) and has successfully completed a number of courses run by CIEEM, BCT and FSC in the

relative protected species, carrying out phase I habitat surveys and BREEAM assessments.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. Barnsley Biological Record Centre (BBRC) and the South Yorkshire Bat Group (SYBG) were contacted for records of bat and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. The BBRC results have not yet been received due to delays caused by COVID-19. As soon as the results are issued this report will be updated and re-issued.

3.1.3. The SYBG holds records of foraging bats at Blacker Dam adjacent to the property, within 100m. The closest record of a bat roost is approximately 580m from the site, which is a record of a Common Pipistrelle maternity roost. All remaining eighty-four records are in excess of 600m of the survey area.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The survey area is located in a rural location surrounded by open fields, tree lines, woodland and a small watercourse flows past the property into a reservoir approximately 110m north.

3.2.2. The aerial map below shows the location of the survey area, indicated by the red arrow.



3.2.3. The survey area comprises a large single storey outbuilding. This is outlined in red in the aerial map below.



3.3. Daytime Survey Results.

3.3.1. The outbuilding is a single storey outbuilding that is generally in very good condition. The building is shown in the photograph below.



3.3.2. The walls are cavity walls, with an outer skin of cut and dressed stone that is well pointed with no cracks or gaps suitable for roosting bats.

3.3.3. The inner skin comprises concrete block. This is in good condition with no cracks or gaps suitable for roosting bats. At each gable end, this inner concrete block skin is not sealed up to the roof. There are large gaps along the top of this internal wall.

3.3.4. The roof is a pitched, stone tiled roof, underlined with a modern breathable membrane and supported by a trussed rafter construction as shown in the photographs below. A small clock tower sits on top of the roof pitch that comprises timber clad walls and a pitched stone tiled roof.



3.3.5. The roof is in very good condition with all the roof tiles closely fitting and no gaps under or missing mortar under ridge tiles suitable for roosting bats. The roof beams are all in excellent condition with no opportunities for roosting bats.

3.3.6. There are soffits around the entirety of the building. These are generally well sealed with the exception of on the north gable end where there are very occasional gaps behind due to the uneven nature of the external stone wall, although some of these are too narrow for bats to access. This leaves just one, potentially two gaps suitable for bats to use to gain entry inside the building or into the top of the wall cavity. These are visible from the inside of the building where daylight can be seen shining through.



3.3.7. No bat field signs were visible on the external wall around these gaps and the gap shown in the photograph above was closely inspected from inside the building and no bat field signs were identified around the gap or on top of the walls leading into the wall cavity at this location.

3.3.8. There is also a gap at the very apex of the southern gable end, but this is located behind a large security light and is therefore unsuitable for bats to use. This is demonstrated in the photograph below.



3.3.9. Internally the building is one open area that has been previously converted into stables with a dog kennel and small tac room. The building is no longer in use for these purposes and is used only for some storage and is accessed on a daily basis with

strip lighting throughout. A false ceiling has been installed above the stables and tack rooms creating a mezzanine floor. The photographs below show the general nature of the internal of the building.



3.3.10. The only available entry points for bats inside the building is via the one or two gaps on the north gable end of the building, although no bats or bat field signs were identified inside the building. Due to the nature of the building if any bats utilised the interior of the barn bat field signs would have been evident during this survey.

3.3.11. Taking all the above into consideration the building is assessed to provide low potential for roosting bats, with the potential limited to occasional individual day roosting bats during the summer months roosting in the top of the wall cavity where there are one or two gaps available on the northern gable end. These features are assessed to be unsuitable for hibernating bats as the walls are not thick enough to maintain suitable temperatures.

3.3.12. An abundance of swallow droppings was found inside the building, these were evident on the roof beams, the mezzanine floor and main floor of the building. One active swallow nest was found present inside the building along with a number of older nests.

4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. There are no records of any bat roosts at or within close proximity to the site that will be impacted on as a result of the proposed works.

4.2. The building is assessed to provide low potential for roosting bats, with the potential limited to occasional individual day roosting bats roosting in the top of the wall cavity where there are one or two gaps available on the northern gable end.

4.3. The works are generally low impact to the main roof and walls of the building, restricted to localised areas of the roof and walls and the conversion of the roof space. There is no potential for roosting bats in the roof or roof space of the building and therefore these works will not impact on roosting bats.

4.4. The works to install new any additional doors and windows will impact on the localised areas of the walls. On the north gable end wall there will be a new door and window installed, which will impact on the lower areas of the walls where it is highly unlikely that there will be any roosting bats present therefore these works will have no direct impact on roosting bats.

4.5. Providing that the external gaps behind the soffit on the north gable end can be retained and that the works are carried out at a time when bats are unlikely to be present, the works will have no impact on any bat roosts and the potential bat roosting features will be retained as an end result.

4.6. One active swallow nest and a number of old swallow nests were identified inside the building. The nesting bird season extends from March to September each year. Any works carried out during the nesting bird season could potentially have a high impact on the any swallows nesting in the building at the time.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. It is recommended that the proposed works are carried out in a way that will result in no impact on the few potential bat roosting opportunities in the building and will ensure that these are retained long term. By adhering to the recommendations provided there will be no requirement for any further bat surveys to be carried out or a Natural England licence to cover the works.

5.2. Firstly, it is recommended that the gaps behind the soffits on the north gable end are retained.

5.3. It is recommended that the works to install the new window and door on the northern gable end are carried out between October and April when bats are in hibernation and are least likely to be present.

5.4. It is recommended that when plastering the internal gable end at the northern end of the building, care is taken to ensure that this does not prevent bats from accessing into the wall cavity from the external gaps under the soffit.

5.5. It is recommended that no new external lighting is installed onto the north gable end wall.

5.6. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework it is recommended that further bat roosting opportunities are installed on the site. As the building works do not allow for an integrated bat box to be installed and there is no practical location for a bat box to be fitted on the wall, it is recommended that two bat boxes are installed on trees or other buildings in the area, away from any direct artificial light source.

5.7. It is recommended that the works are carried out outside the nesting bird season when the swallows are not nesting. In the event that swallows start to nest whilst the works are in progress, the nest must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

5.8. It is recommended that swallow nesting opportunities are incorporated somewhere on the land owned by Lakeside View. Swallows need a sheltered canopy to nest under, preferably in an open building. It is recommended that a minimum of two swallow nest cups are installed in suitable locations.

Prepared by:	
Ruth Georgiou. BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 2 nd June 2020.

Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher. BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 2 nd June 2020.

6. REFERENCES.

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. 2017. ***Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition***. CIEEM, Hampshire.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. 2017. ***Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition***. CIEEM, Hampshire.
1981. ***Wildlife and Countryside Act***. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69> (accessed 18/02/16)
2000. ***Countryside and Rights of Way Act***.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>.
2017. ***The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations***.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made>.
2012. ***National Planning Policy Statement***.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Anon. 1995. ***Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group report. Vol 2: Action Plans***. HMSO, London.
- Collins J. (ed.) 2016. ***Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologist: Good Practice Guidelines***.^{3rd} ed. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- English Nature. 2004. ***Bat Mitigation Guidelines***. English Nature, Peterborough, UK.
- BTHK 2018. ***Bat Roosts in Trees – A Guide to Identification and Assessment for Tree-Care and Ecology Professionals***. Exeter: Pelagic Publishing.

Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATs agreement. Numerous species are

also listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Toolbox Talk: Bats

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants



18 species of bat have been recorded in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here.

Identification.

Some species can be extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Species such as the Brown Long Eared bat pictured above can be more easily identified in the hand. Whereas, the Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle are more difficult to identify.



Bats are more easily identified by field signs such as droppings or feeding remains.



Habitat.

Bats are highly specialised creatures and require a relatively narrow range of suitable conditions in order to sustain a viable population. Bats require an abundant supply of flying insect food in places where they can easily be caught and they need safe and reliable roosting sites, particularly during breeding and hibernation.

Bats are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and therefore extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities. Development schemes can also isolate bat populations and sever roost sites from favoured feeding areas by removing hedgerows or other features used as commuting routes.

Bats are susceptible to disturbance and have been known to abandon roost sites after instances of disturbance. The effects of disturbance are more pronounced at different times of year. Serious disturbance during breeding can result in the breeding females being killed or the abandonment and subsequent starvation of dependant young. Repeated disturbance during winter hibernation can result in the death of adult animals from starvation.

The level of protection afforded to bats in the UK and European legislation reflects the fact that it is now generally accepted that bats have declined substantially, maybe by as much as 60%, over recent years. Most species are declining and vulnerable with all species being protected.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and occasionally the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly Pipistrelle, can quickly adapt to manmade structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Legislation.

Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not). This protection comes from the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 1994. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

Under the Habitats Regulations, where bats may be affected by development proposals, a licence is required from Natural England. Natural England's published guidelines on the licence procedure indicate that if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence then a licence is required. If, on the other hand the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence, then a licence is not required.

If bats or bat field signs are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk