Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

ROYSTON WORKING MEN'S CLUB.

OS REF: SE 36277 11314.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: **240457.**

Date: **5th September 2024.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. An application is being prepared for the demolition of a building formerly used as a working men's club and the development of residential dwellings.

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. The preliminary roost assessment was carried out on 7th May 2024 and made recommendations for further dusk emergence surveys.

1.4. The dusk emergence surveys have now been carried out and this report outlines the findings of both the PRA, and the subsequent surveys.

1.5. Appendices I and II of this report provides additional information on bats, nesting birds and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

1.6. As the site consists of only hardstanding and buildings with less than 25m^2 of habitats, no biodiversity net gain assessment is required.

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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 windowsills, 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.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*, with an assessment of the buildings suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.6. This survey was carried out by Jess Mason MSc ACIEEM FRGS. Since 2018 Jess has had experience in a professional capacity as an Ecologist carrying out ecology surveys and phase I habitat surveys. Jess holds Natural England survey licences in respect of bats (2023-11208-CL18-BAT), barn owls (2024-11866-CL29-OWL), and great crested newts (2023-11456-CL08-GCN), and a Scottish Natural Heritage survey licence in respect of barn owls. She has also successfully completed a number of courses run by CIEEM and the FSC in the relative protected species andcarrying out habitat surveys and has a MSc in Biological Recording. Jess is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to the South Yorkshire Bat Group and Barnsley Biological Records Centre for records of bats and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. South Yorkshire bat group returned seventy records of seven bat species. The closest record is approximately 170m to the north of the survey area and describes an injured bat taken into care. The closest confirmed roost record is a pipistrelle roost in a residential property approximately 600m from the survey area.

3.1.3. The data search carried out by Barnsley Biological Records Centre returned mostly the same records as South Yorkshire Bat Group. The closest record is a vague record of "bats" at a property approximately 160m from the survey area. Other than a number of vague 1km records, all other records are the same as returned from South Yorkshire Bat Group.

3.1.4. A copy of the data search results can be provided to the client upon request but should not be placed into the public domain.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The survey area comprises a complex building formerly used as a working men's club, which is located in the urban area of Royston. The surveyed building is shown below by the red shape.

3.2.2. The immediate surrounding area comprises the urban area of Royston, with car parks, roads, residential housing, and a cemetery.

3.2.3. The further surroundings are equally urban, with small areas of green space comprising playing fields, urban treelines, or small woodland pockets.

3.3. Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.3.1. The surveyed building is a brick-built complex building which is mostly two-storey with a series of single-storey and two-storey extensions. The building comprises

brick and stone walls throughout, some of which are rendered, with a complex roof structure comprising both pitched roofs and flat roofs.

3.3.2. Externally, the building is in a moderate condition, but small defects can be seen throughout. The walls themselves are in fair condition, but areas of missing mortar and fractures were identified, as shown in the photographs below.

3.3.3. Wooden panels were present on the external walls of a two-storey extension to the north of the building, shown in the photograph below. Several of the panels were damaged or deteriorated, providing access to the space between the external wall and panelling. This could not be inspected closely due to the height of the feature.

3.3.4. The fascias and guttering around the remaining parts of the building were in good condition with no visible gaps which could provide potential roost features for bats, shown in the photograph below.

3.3.5. The parts of the buildings with pitched roofs are in a moderate condition with all visible tiles sitting flush. Some of these are chipped or showing general signs of aging, but none are in such a condition as to allow bats to roost beneath. Examples of these are shown below.

3.3.6. The gable ends were in good condition with no visible access points for bats.

3.3.7. Any flashing seen from ground level was generally in good condition. However, one area of lifted flashing was identified at the base of a chimney stack on the southeastern aspect of the building, as shown the photograph below.

3.3.8. The remaining parts of the building with flat roofs could not be seen from ground level. Therefore, the condition of any materials used on the flat roofs is unknown.

3.3.9. It is known that there are loft spaces within the parts of the building with pitched roofs. However, these loft spaces were not accessible during the survey.

3.3.10. Any areas beneath the sections which had potential for roosting bats were thoroughly inspected for any field signs such as droppings, staining or insect remains. No such field signs were identified.

3.3.11. The results of this survey found a number of features that provided potential roost features. However, the features are not assessed as being suitable for large numbers of bats or maternity roosts, and no access points into the loft spaces were identified. Furthermore, the building is in a brightly lit built-up area with limited foraging opportunities in the immediate surroundings, further reducing the likelihood of high-value maternity roosts thriving. However, the features identified may provide roosting opportunities for low numbers of bats in the summer months, and the condition of the loft spaces remains unknown. Therefore, the building is assessed to provide **moderate potential for summer roosting bats**.

3.3.12. The building has no visible access into the roof space for hibernating bats, and is therefore assessed as providing **negligible potential for hibernating bats**.

3.3.13. The building provides some small features which could be used by nesting birds, including the flat roofs and defects in the brickwork identified in this report.

3.4. Dusk emergence survey – 5th August 2024

3.4.1. As the property was initially assessed as having moderate potential for roosting bats, two dusk emergence surveys were recommended and subsequently carried out.

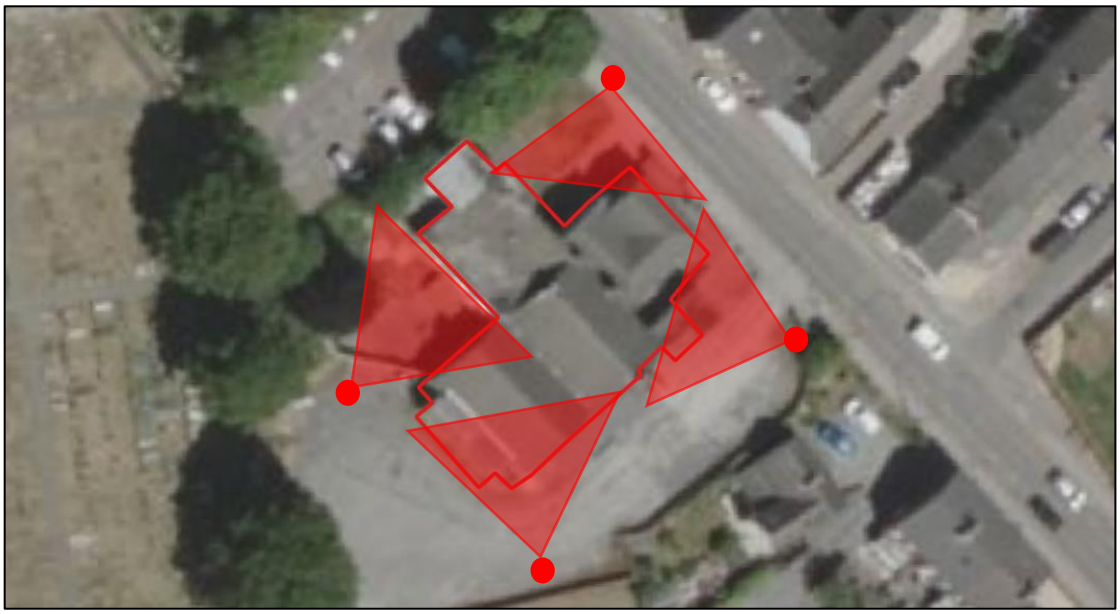
3.4.2. The first survey was led by Jess Mason, who holds a level two Natural England survey licence in respect of bats (2023-11208-CL18-BAT). She was accompanied by two other surveyors who are experienced assistants.

3.4.3. All surveyors were equipped with Batbox Duet detectors and two-way radios. Three Anabat Express static recorders were deployed around the site to record bat activity for subsequent computer analysis using Analook Software.

3.4.4. Four infrared cameras and infrared torches were also set up around the property, ensuring that all aspects of the building were covered.

3.4.5. The aerial photograph below shows where the Surveyors (S) and Anabats (AB) were located throughout the survey.

3.4.6. The aerial photograph below shows where the cameras were positioned along with their approximate field of view.



3.4.7. The below shows start and end still photographs which show the views of the cameras both at the beginning of the survey as well as at the end of the survey.

3.4.8. The survey was carried out on the 5th August 2024. The evening was mild, with a temperature of 18℃ at the start of the survey with a very slight breeze measuring 1 on the Beaufort scale. Sunset was at 20:53 and the survey lasted from 20:38 until 22:23.

3.4.9. Activity during the survey was moderate with common pipistrelle and noctule sporadically being recorded foraging over the property. The highest level of activity was recorded in the north and west of the site, with a number of bats recorded foraging or commuting along the treelines bordering the property.

3.4.10. No bats were seen to emerge from the building. This was confirmed by subsequent analysis of the infrared camera footage.

3.4.11. Subsequent analysis of the Anabat recorders agreed with the findings of the surveyors. Up to thirty-five recordings of common pipistrelle and up to fifteen recordings of noctule were made by any individual Anabat during the course of the survey.

3.5. Dusk emergence survey – 2nd September 2024

3.4.1. This was the second and final survey carried out.

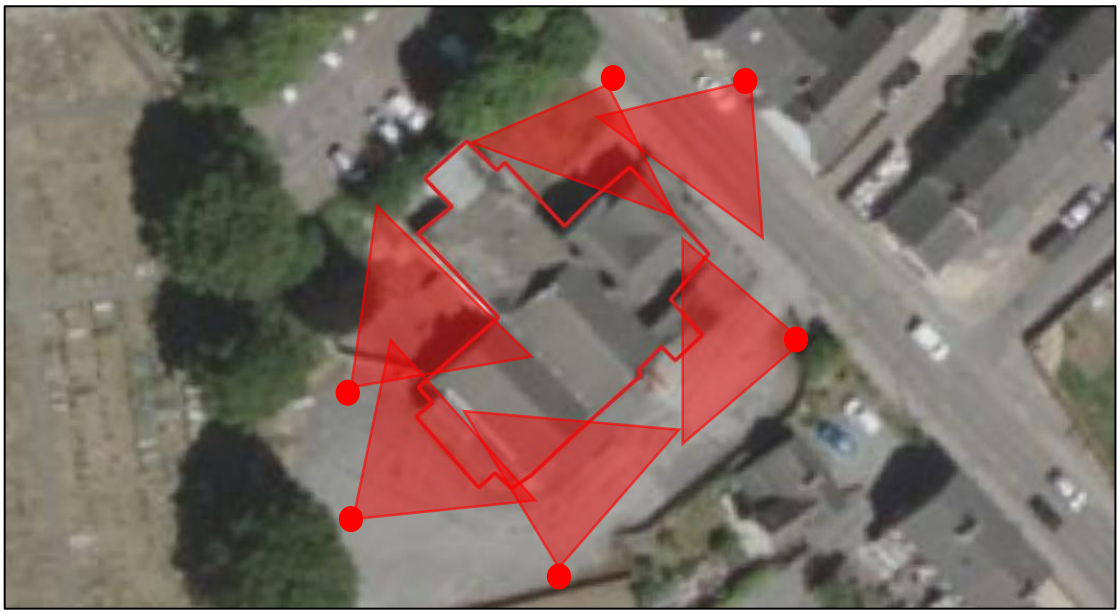
3.4.2. The survey was led by Jess Mason, who holds a level two Natural England survey licence in respect of bats (2023-11208-CL18-BAT). She was accompanied by two other surveyors who are experienced assistants.

3.4.3. All surveyors were equipped with Batbox Duet detectors and two-way radios. Three Anabat Express static recorders were deployed around the site to record bat activity for subsequent computer analysis using Analook Software.

3.4.4. Six infrared cameras and infrared torches were also set up around the property, ensuring that all aspects of the building were covered.

3.4.5. The aerial photograph below shows where the Surveyors (S) and Anabats (AB) were located throughout the survey.

3.4.6. The aerial photograph below shows where the cameras were positioned along with their approximate field of view.



3.4.7. The below shows start and end still photographs which show the views of the cameras both at the beginning of the surveys as well as at the end of the surveys.


09/02/2024 19:45:14


09/02/2024 21:23:18


09/02/2024 19:28:39


09/02/2024 19:28:02


09/02/2024 21:21:01


09/02/2024 19:28:00


09/02/2024 21:21:46


SW
For Sale
0.52 Acres
09/02/2024 19:45:49


SW
For Sale
0.52 Acres

3.4.8. The survey was carried out on the 2nd September 2024. The evening was mild, with a temperature of 19℃ at the start of the survey with a moderate breeze measuring 2 on the Beaufort scale. Sunset was at 19:52 and the survey lasted from 19:37 until 21:22.

3.4.9. Activity during the survey was moderate with common pipistrelle and noctule sporadically being recorded foraging over the property. The highest level of activity was recorded in the west of the site, with a number of bats recorded foraging within the trees on the boundary of the property.

3.4.10. No bats were seen to emerge from the building. This was confirmed by subsequent analysis of the infrared camera footage.

3.4.11. Subsequent analysis of the Anabat recorders agreed with the findings of the surveyors. Up to two hundred and forty-five recordings of common pipistrelle and seven recordings of noctule were made by Anabat 1 to the west of the property during the course of the survey.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The building was initially assessed as having **moderate potential for summer roosting bats**. However, two dusk emergence surveys were carried out and no bats were found to be roosting in the building. Therefore, the proposed works will have no impact on roosting bats.

4.2. The building was assessed as having **negligible potential for hibernating bats** and the proposed works will therefore have no impact on hibernating bats.

4.3. The site is located in an urban location, with some potential for foraging and commuting non-light sensitive bat species. However, no suitable habitats were present within the site boundary. Therefore, the proposed works will not cause any loss or fragmentation of bat foraging or commuting habitats.

4.4. The flat roofs of the building and defects within the walls provide potential nesting opportunities for birds. The nesting bird season extends from March to August each year. Therefore, demolition of the house within this timeframe could have a negative impact on nesting birds if they are present.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. The surveys of the building found no roosts to be present within. However, individual bats can opportunistically roost almost anywhere and therefore it is recommended that the demolition of this building is carried out with due care and attention and in the unlikely event that a bat is found during those works, it should be kept safe and professional advice should be sought immediately.

5.2. The building on site provides no suitable hibernation potential for bats and therefore, there is no recommendation for further hibernation surveys.

5.3. It is recommended that where possible the demolition and any external works are carried out outside of the nesting bird season. Where this is not possible, it is recommended that they are immediately preceded by a nesting bird survey to identify if there are any nesting birds present. If any active nests are found, a buffer zone around them should be left and no works should be carried out that will disturb the nest or prevent the birds from accessing to and from the nest, until the young have fledged.

5.4. To satisfy the NPPF requirements to provide enhancements on the site, it is recommended that an integrated bat box is provided in any new building. This should ideally be south facing and located at least 4m above ground level. In addition, it is recommended that one pair of integrated swift boxes is also provided in any new building. This should ideally be east-facing, away from the prevailing winds and the roads, and at least 3m above ground level.

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Prepared by:	
Jess Mason MSc ACIEEM FRGS	Date: 7th May 2024
Revised by:	
Jess Mason MSc ACIEEM FRGS	Date: 5th September 2024

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou. BSc, MCIEEM	Date: 5th September 2024

6. REFERENCES.

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Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which 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 of 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.

Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.