PENNINE ecological

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Leith Planning Group
4 The Crossroads Business Park
Freckleton Street
Kirkham
PR4 2SH

Date: 27th July 2021

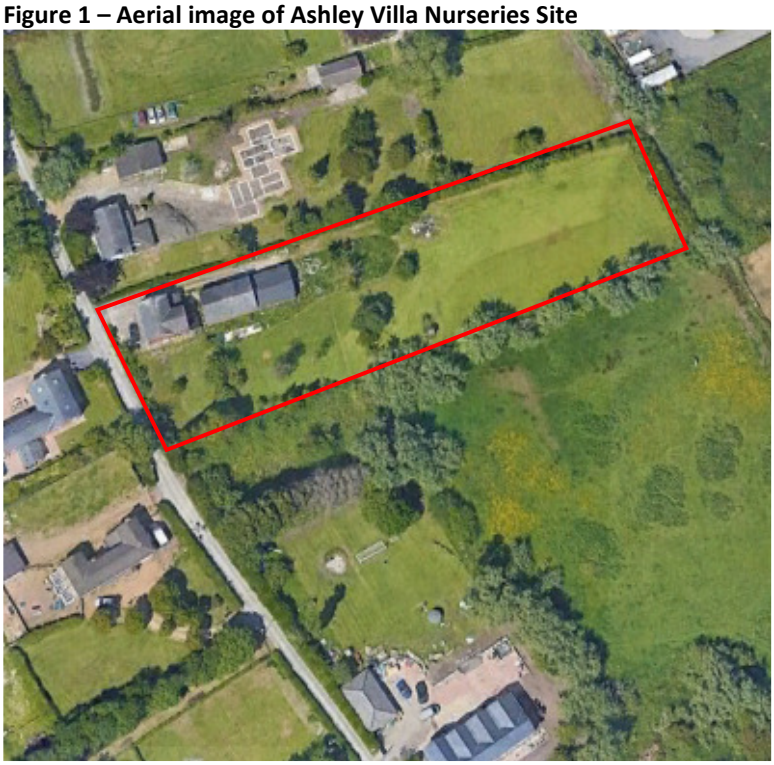
For the attention of: Paige Linley

Dear Paige,

Re: Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment: Ashley Villa Nurseries, Blackpool, FY4 5EP.

PENNINE *Ecological* have been commissioned to undertake a daytime inspection and assessment of bats at the above site. The purpose of this study is to address any potential issues in relation to bats resulting from the extension and conversion of the barn building. The sites grid reference is SD 3393 3229 and the location is shown below;

Figure 1 – Aerial image of Ashley Villa Nurseries Site



1. Desk Top Study:

A desk top consultation study with Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN) was not undertaken for this study. However, searches for statutory sites were undertaken as follows;

Statutory Sites:
Details of statutory sites were sought from the Natural England web site search:
http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx

There are no statutory protected wildlife sites within 500m radii of the site. The Natural England (NE) Impact Risk Zone tool has been reviewed and consultation with NE is not required for the development.

European Protected Species Mitigation Licences:
Details of European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) for bats was sought from the Natural England web site search:
http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx

There are no EPSML in relation to bats within 500m radii of the site.

2. Bat Ecology and Legislation:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

All British bats and their roosts[1] are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the 2017 Regulations and therefore has a statutory duty to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 in relation to species and habitats, places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to encourage consideration that should be given to Protected Species where they may be affected by development. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in relation to planning and nature conservation.

This is supported by a guide to good practice entitled 'Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Building in Biodiversity' in which paragraphs 5.34 and 5.35 identify that species such as bats are highly dependent upon built structures for survival and that roosts can be easily incorporated into existing and new developments/conversions to benefit these species.

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles (NPPF, 2019):

If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

[1] *The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (Regulation 41) the term roost is not used but refers to "a breeding site or resting place of such an animal" and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.*

Use of Buildings by Bats:

a) Summer breeding roost.
b) Hibernation.
c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

Up to 11 bat species have been regularly recorded in Lancashire most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties for roosting. The most frequently encountered species is the Pipistrelle bat; its abundant status in Lancashire is reflected throughout the UK.

3. Survey Methodology:

A daytime survey was conducted on 21st July 2021. The buildings were inspected internally and externally for bat roost potential. The inspection included a search for evidence of bats and potential places / points of internal access that may be of value to bats. The elevations were investigated from ground floor level, with the aid of close focusing binoculars, for places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers.

The daytime survey was conducted by Mr. Patrick Leatham, BSc. (Hons.), MCIEEM, who is an experienced ecologist. The results of the survey were discussed with Mrs Kylee Wilding, a highly experienced bat surveyor who holds a Natural England Class 2 bat license (CLS -14227). Mrs Wildings evaluation of the site and conclusions concur with those of Mr Leatham's.

Constraints:

There were no constraints to the survey. All elevations were accessed and a full inspection of the internal space of the building was completed.

There are therefore no constraints to the survey.

4. Bat Survey Results:

The proposals include an extension to the existing barn building and a conversion of the barn from a storage unit into a dwelling. The barn will be extended to adjoin to the main building which is currently occupied. There will be no change to the main building, other than the western wall partially knocked through to adjoin to the barn. Subsequently there will be no impact on bats potentially using the main building and no further assessment has been completed on this building.

The barn is a two-skin brick wall build with a slate roof and felt underlay. Wooden fascia boards are present along the north and south elevations, with plastic soffits along the west and east elevations of the barn. A number of features have been identified on this building and are provided in Table 1 below, with supporting photographs provided at the end of this report:

Table 1 – Ashley Villa Nurseries (barn building): Potential Roost Feature Details

Potential Roost Feature Reference	Elevation	PRF Description
PRF1	North	A Dislodged slates on the south roof pitch with daylight observed from inside the barn in some locations.
PRF2	South	As per PRF1. Gaps in dislodged roof slates on the north roof pitch.
PRF3	North	Gaps between the brick wall and wooden fascia along the entire south elevation.
PRF4	South	As per PRF3 along the entire north elevation.

No evidence of bats (e.g. bat droppings, feeding remains) was observed during the internal inspection of the barn building. However suitable cavities, in particular between the brick wall skins, were present on all elevations.

During the internal inspection, a bird was heard calling from what appeared to be inside the wall cavity on the north-east corner of the building. The area was searched but no nest could be found. It is possible that there was an active birds nest within the wall cavity. Historic nesting evidence was recorded throughout the barn.

The buildings are situated within a rural landscape to the south of Blackpool. Within the site, garden landscape which includes areas of trees, hedgerows and tall ruderal / scrub provides optimal foraging habitat. This is connected to optimal bat foraging habitat within the wider landscape by a series of hedgerows. Ponds and allotments are also present within the immediate surrounding landscape and overall the habitat associated with the site is considered to be of high value for bats.

It is considered that roost potential of Ashley Villa Nurseries is of **Moderate potential.**

5. Recommendations:

Since the barn is considered to possess moderate potential for crevice dwelling bats, it is recommended that dusk emergence and/or dawn re-entry surveys should be undertaken. Surveys are required to establish whether or not bats are using the building and if present how they are using it.

The surveys will need to be conducted during the main active season of bats i.e. between May – August. **Two dusk/dawn surveys** are accepted as being a reasonable level of survey effort where moderate potential has been identified. The surveys must be spaced between those months, at least two weeks apart. In addition, a data search of local bat records could be sourced to compliment the surveys.

Figure 2 - Extract from Bat Conservation Trust: Bat Survey Guidelines 2016 3rd Edition

Table 7.3 Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).

Low roost suitability	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability
One survey visit. One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey[a] (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey.[b]	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third visit could be either dusk or dawn.[b]

[a] Structures that have been categorised as low potential can be problematic and the number of surveys required should be judged on a case-by-case basis (see Section 5.2.9). If there is a possibility that quiet calling, late-emerging species are present then a dawn survey may be more appropriate, providing weather conditions are suitable. In some cases, more than one survey may be needed, particularly where there are several buildings in this category.

[b] Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period (see Table 7.1) as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced at least two weeks apart, preferably more. A dawn survey immediately after a dusk one is considered only one visit.

Following the completion of these surveys further recommendations will be made in respect of any issues in relation to bats and breeding birds.

If you require clarification on any issue, please contact me at the above address.

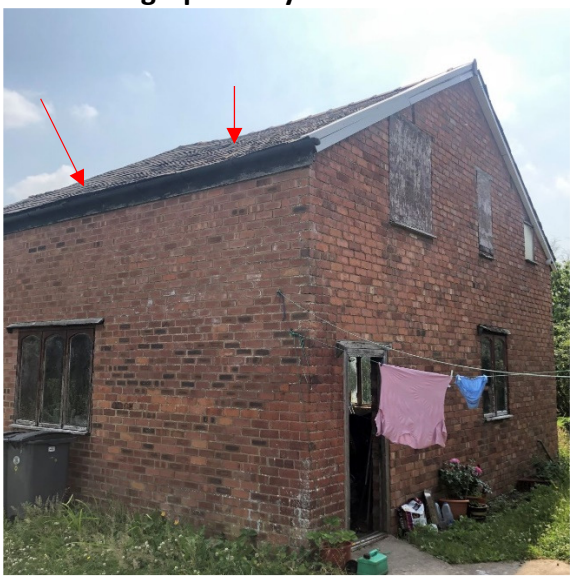
Yours faithfully

Patrick Leatham

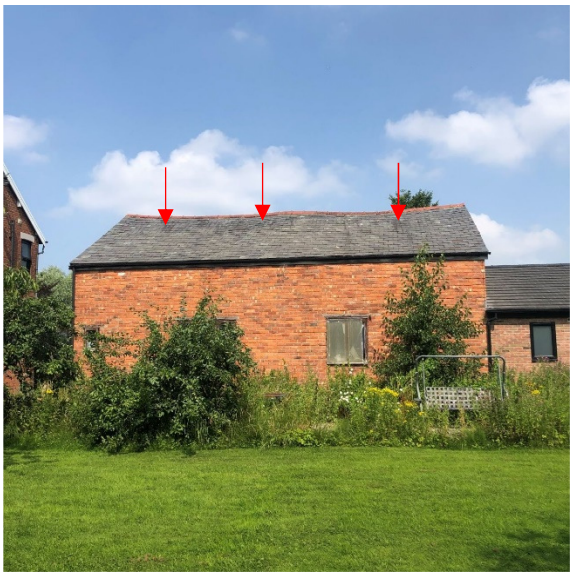
Patrick Leatham BSc (Hons), MCIEEM.

(see photographs on following page)

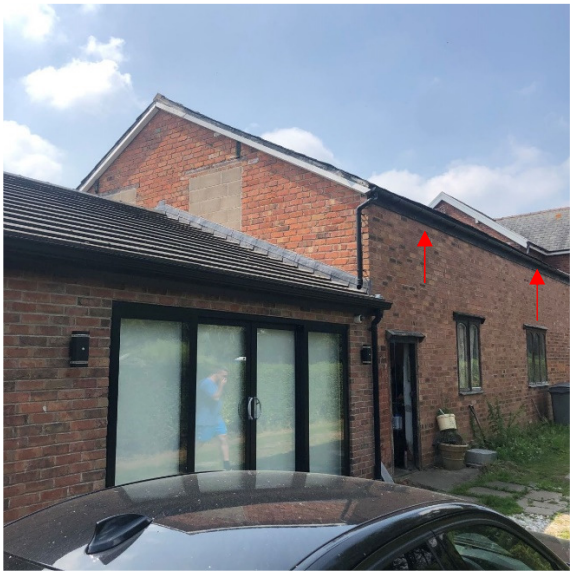
Site Photographs: July 21st 2021



Photograph 1: PRF1 gaps on the north roof pitch where slates have become dislodged.

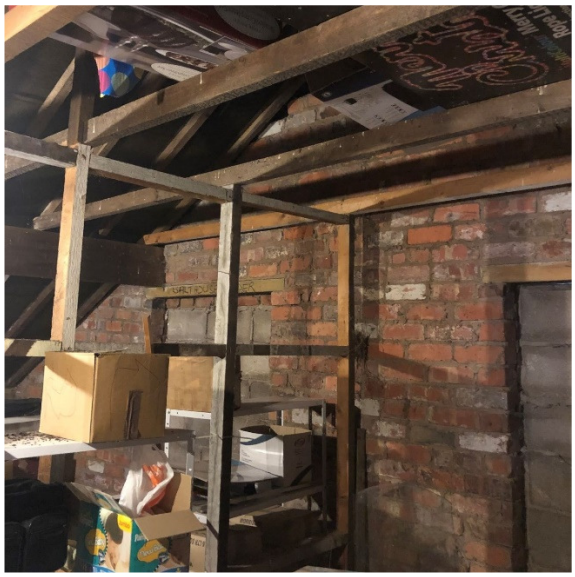


Photograph 2: PRF2 gaps on the south roof pitch where slates have become dislodged.

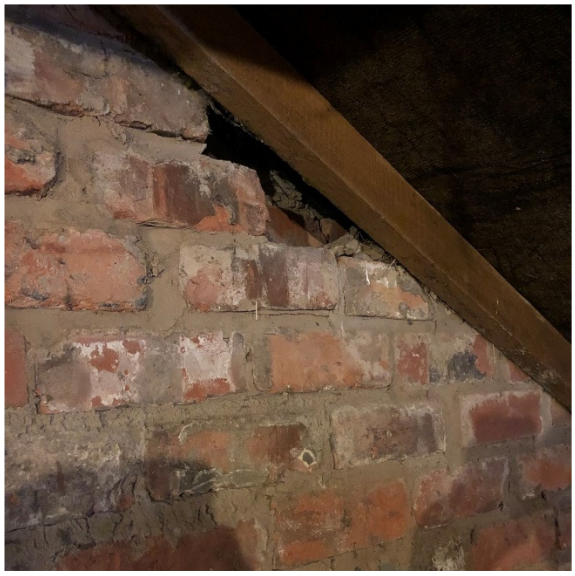


Photograph 3: PRF3 gaps between wooden fascia board and brick wall on north elevation.

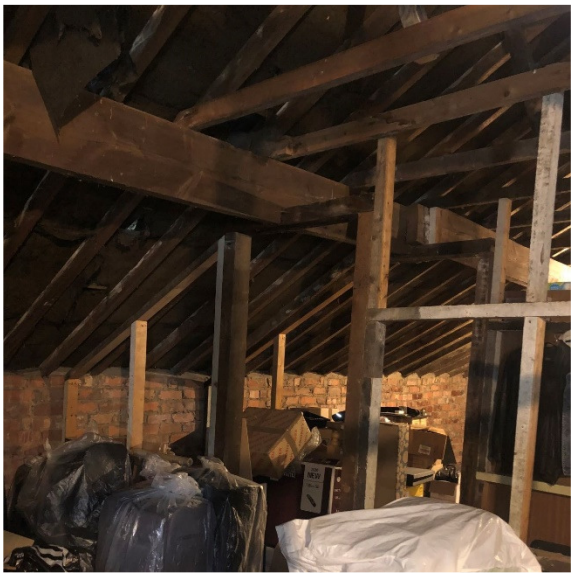
Photograph 4: PRF4 gaps between wooden fascia board and brick wall on south elevation.



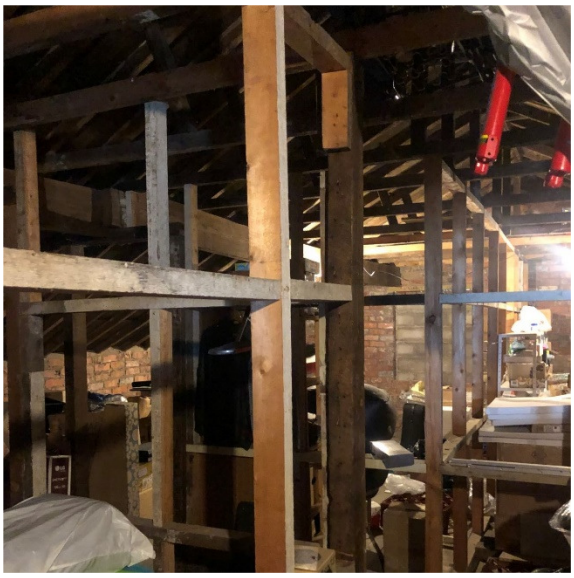
Photograph 5: Internal view of the eastern side of the barn.



Photograph 6: Example of wall cavity. This feature is present throughout the barn.



Photograph 7: View of the north internal roof pitch. Gaps observed in felt and slates allowing daylight through.



Photograph 8: Overview of the internal space in the barn. The barn is currently used for storage.