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28 June 2021

Dear To Whom It May Concern,

**Report of Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment at Great Birchwood Country Park Lytham Road,
Lytham, Lancashire, PR4 1TE**

You instructed us to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment (also referred to as the; “PRA, survey, report”) at the above-named property (also referred to as the; “site, building, structure”). The survey was undertaken on 24th May 2021. My qualifications and experience along with those of the reviewer of this report are summarised at the end of this report.

A previous Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out by Arbtech in November 2016 with subsequent Bat Emergence/Re-entry Surveys conducted in 2017. Buildings B10 and B11 were found to be confirmed bat roosts, with a maternity roost of common pipistrelles within B10 and a day roost of the same species in B11. All other building were found to contain no bat roosts.

The purpose of this report is to update the previous 2016 Preliminary Roost Assessment and to assess the buildings for any material changes in condition since the previous site visit. Updated Bat Emergence and Activity Surveys have also been carried out, please see the report for details of these surveys.

My full report follows.

Aims

In a manner that is proportionate to scale, nature and intensity of the proposed development and its probable interactions with ecological receptors, specifically bats:

Survey

To describe the physical evidence and to evaluate the significance of features that contribute to or detract from the 'roost suitability' of the site, in the context of the desk study, and the proximate and wider landscape.

Evaluation

To describe the constraints to the proposed development as a result of the risk of harm or disturbance to bats (if any).

To set out any recommendations for further survey effort, where this risk is unacceptable or a complete understanding of how bats are using the site cannot be defensibly argued.

To inform any subsequent mitigation proposals in order to achieve a planning or other statutory consent, and to comply with wildlife legislation.

Methods

Survey

For the desk study:

To objectively demonstrate the presence of roosting bats or evaluate the likelihood of presence of roosting bats and offer an assessment of how they could be using the site, I undertook a desk study. This included review of all statutory and non-statutory designated sites, Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats and granted EPSML records for bats held on governmental databases (including MAGIC) within a 1km radius of the site. I also made an assessment of the surrounding landscape structure, using aerial images from Google Earth and Ordnance Survey maps.

General:

I systematically assessed all features that will be impacted by the development proposals for bats, evidence of bat activity, and roosting or commuting habitat.

For all structures:

Externally, I made a non-intrusive, visual appraisal from the ground using binoculars, inspecting the external features of the structure(s) for potential access and egress points, and for signs of bat use.

For buildings:

Internally, I made an inspection of the building, including the living areas of derelict or abandoned buildings and the accessible roof spaces of all buildings, using an endoscope, torch and ladders. I paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of all accessible features within the roof space.

Birds:

I also made a note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey. Commonly, this relates to the risk of harm to breeding birds, and the suitability of the site to support barn owls *Tyto alba*.

Evaluation

The evaluation that drives an assessment of likelihood is, by nature, probabilistic. The evaluation methodology I employed for the PRA is described by Colins (2016) and summarised in the table below:

Evidence, likelihood of presence and significance of habitat features	
Possible survey findings	What this means for you
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Bats ⇒ Evidence of bat roosting or activity ⇒ Quantitatively significant or qualitatively important features for roosting ⇒ Connectivity to high quality habitat for roosting, foraging and commuting in the proximate and wider landscape 	<p>There are probable and foreseeable impacts to bats and their roosts in consequence of your development. These impacts present a real risk of harm or disturbance to bats. In order to prevent this outcome and any criminal liability, further survey effort is necessary to appropriately inform mitigation and enhancement. Thereafter, a planning decision can be defensibly made in favour of the proposed development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ No bats ⇒ No evidence of bat roosting or activity ⇒ A small number of qualitatively poor features for roosting (if any) ⇒ Limited connectivity to poor-quality habitat in the proximate and wider landscape (if any) 	<p>Any impact to bats and their roosts is extremely improbable or negligible. Bats and their roosts do not present any constraints to your development. A planning decision can be defensibly made in favour of the proposed development without delay.</p>

Limitations

There were no specific limitations to the survey effort.

Findings

The findings collate the data of the desk study, the evidence of the physical survey and any other substantiation (such as the result of DNA tests of physical evidence collected on site).

Photographs with descriptions are only included where appropriate i.e., where they enhance the reader's comprehension of the relevance of salient features on site, or provide valuable context to the evaluation, foreseen impacts and recommendations.

Description of the site and proposed development

B1 is a single-storey breeze block-built residential property with dual pitch roof of corrugated metal sheets. The previous survey found the building to have negligible habitat for roosting bats. The updated 2021 site visit found the building to still have negligible habitat for bats.

B2 is a single-storey L-shaped, brick-built house with dual pitched roof of clay tiles and corrugated metal sheeting. The previous survey found B2 to have low potential for supporting roosting bats. A subsequent bat emergence survey was carried out on 2017 which found no bats to be found roosting within the building. There have been no material changes in the condition of the building and as such it is determined that bats are unlikely to have started to utilise the building.

B3 is a single-storey wood-built shed with mono-pitched roof of wood. The structure appears to be in need of repair. The previous survey found the building to have negligible habitat for roosting bats. The updated 2021 site visit found the building to still have negligible habitat for bats.

B4 is a single-storey wood-built structure with dual pitched roof of felt. The roof comprises of felt over wood. The previous survey found the building to have negligible habitat for roosting bats. The updated 2021 site visit found the building to still have negligible habitat for bats.

B5 is a large domed barn comprising steel frame and corrugated metal and plastic sheeting. The previous survey found the building to have negligible habitat for roosting bats. The updated 2021 site visit found the building to still have negligible habitat for bats.

B6 is a single-storey breeze block-built stable block with mono-pitched roof of corrugated metal sheeting. The previous survey found the building to have negligible habitat for roosting bats. The updated 2021 site visit found the building to still have negligible habitat for bats.

B7 is a two single-storey breeze block-built stable blocks with dual-pitched roof of corrugated metal sheeting. The previous survey found the building to have negligible habitat for roosting bats. The updated 2021 site visit found the building to still have negligible habitat for bats.

B8 is a single-storey breeze block-built stable block with mono-pitched roof of corrugated metal sheeting. The previous survey found the building to have negligible habitat for roosting bats. The updated 2021 site visit found the building to still have negligible habitat for bats.

B9 has been demolished since the 2017 site visit and as such is no longer present.

B10 is a single-storey L-shaped, wooden-built structure with mono-pitched roof of corrugated metal sheeting. The previous survey found B10 to have low potential for supporting roosting bats. During the subsequent bat emergence survey bats were found to be roosting within the building. A full suite of three surveys was subsequently carried out which found the building to contain a maternity roost of common pipistrelle bats. During the updated 2021 site visit an inspection of the previously known roosting locations were carried out and pipistrelle bats were found to the roosting behind the weatherboarding on the southern and western elevations of the building. A follow up bat emergence survey confirmed the presence of a common pipistrelle maternity being present within B10.

B11 consists of three sections; the cabin (which is an L-shaped, wooden-built structure with mono-pitched roof of corrugated metal sheeting surrounding the eastern and southern elevations of the central section of the structure), the bar (which comprises steel frames with corrugated metal sheeting walls and dual pitched roof of corrugated metal sheeting) and the cellar (which is a single storey brick-built cellar with flat roof of concrete). The previous survey found B11 to have low potential for supporting roosting bats. During the subsequent bat emergence survey bats were found to be roosting within the building. A full suite of three surveys was subsequently carried out which found the building to contain a day roost of common pipistrelle bats. The building appeared to be in a materially similar condition to the 2017 site visit. A follow up bat emergence survey confirmed the present of a common pipistrelle day roost still being present within the building.

B12 is a single-storey steel-built workshop with dual pitched roof of corrugated metal sheeting. The previous survey found the building to have negligible habitat for roosting bats. The updated 2021 site visit found the building to still have negligible habitat for bats.

Principal Photos



Figures 1 & 2: B1 and B2



Figures 3 & 4: B3 and B5



Figures 5 & 6: B6, B7 and B8



Figures 7 & 8: Eastern and western elevations of B10



Figures 9 & 10: Western and eastern elevations of B11



Figures 10 & 11: pipistrelle bat behind weather boarding on western elevation of B10

Site Plan



Figure 12: site plan.

Summary of Desk Study

There are a number of statutory and non-statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the, which have been summarised in the table below:

Designated Site Name	Distance from Site (approx)	Reasons for Notification and integral value
Statutory Sites		
Ribble and Alt Estuaries - RAMSAR, SSSI, SPA, MCZ, SPA(Marine)	200m S	Extensive intertidal sand-silt flats with one of the largest areas of grazed greenmarsh in Britain. The estuary is of international importance for the passage and wintering waterfowl
Ribble Estuary - NNR	600m SW	The reserve occupies over half of the total area of the Ribble Estuary, including extensive areas of mud and sand flats and one of the largest single areas of saltmarsh in England.
Lytham Coastal Changes - SSSI	1km W	Geological interest
Non-statutory Sites		
Ribble and Alt Estuaries - IBA	200m S	Intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh important for wintering and passage wildfowl and waders and for breeding gulls.
Warton Brows	1km SE	Coastal mosaic of species-rich, semi-natural grassland and mature scrub situated along and above the bank between the saltmarsh of the Ribble Estuary SSSI and Warton Aerodrome
Lytham Foreshore Dunes and Saltmarsh - BHS	1.1km W	Habitats including sand dunes, dune grassland, saltmarsh, foreshore with shingle, sand and mudflats

The Magic database shows an extensive area of coastal saltmarsh approximately 300m south of the site; coastal and floodplain grazing marsh adjacent to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site extending north; a traditional orchard approximately 1.7km north east of the site; a small block of deciduous woodland adjacent to the western boundary of the site, approximately 600m west and 300m north west; further small blocks of deciduous woodland are located in the surrounding landscape >600m from the site; and a strip of good quality semi-improved grassland is located approximately 1.3km south east of the site. These habitats are likely to be classified as Priority habitats of principle importance, and of particular value to bats. There has been one granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) within a 2km radius of the site involving the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle bats.

Conclusion

Buildings B1 – B9, and B12 have negligible habitat value for supporting roosting and as such there is not expected to be any impact on roosting bats as a result of the demolition of these buildings. Buildings B10 and B11 will require an European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) once planning permission has been granted. The mitigation provided within the 2017 Bat Emergence/Re-entry Survey report is still valid as similar findings were found on both surveys, and therefore the same mitigation will be required. For full details of the mitigation and compensation that will be required as part of the licence application please refer to this report.

References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Garland & Markham (2008) Is important bat foraging and commuting habitat legally protected?

Google Earth (2021) accessed on 09/06/2021.

Magic database (2021) <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> accessed on 09/06/2021.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

Report ends.

I trust this is sufficient for your assessment. However, if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me via 07711591700 or melreid@arbtech.co.uk.

**Author**

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accredited agent to Natural England bat licence number: 2016-22119-CLS-CLS

Reviewer

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