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20<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Ref: RLHP-2309-BS**

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## Bat Survey



## Riverside Lodge, Huntly Place, Aboyne

Client: Neal and Nia Grey-Wannell

Survey Dates: 1<sup>st</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023

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## Bat Survey

# Riverside Lodge, Huntly Place, Aboyne

## Contents

Survey Summary	3
Location of Site	3
Development Proposals	3
Purpose of Report	4
Data Collection & Survey Methodology	4
Preliminary Roost Assessment:	4
Activity Surveys:	5
Survey Constraints	5
Breeding Birds	5
Assessment of Environment	5
Survey Results	6
Desktop Survey	6
Preliminary Roost Assessment	6
Hibernation Potential	6
Emergence Surveys	7
Observer Positions	7
Emergence Survey 01 August 2023	7
Emergence Survey 23 August 2023	7
Summary of Bat Passes Recorded	8
Interpretation & Evaluation	8
Impact Assessment & Mitigation	8
Appendix A: External Photos	9
Appendix B: Bats in Scotland	10
Appendix C: Bats and the Law	10
Appendix D: Bat Licensing	11
Appendix E: Surveyor Qualifications	11
Appendix F: Contact Details	11

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## Bat Survey

# Riverside Lodge, Huntly Place, Aboyne

## Survey Summary

Riverside Lodge is located towards the south of Aboyne and in close proximity to the River Dee. It has good bat foraging habitat in the woodland gardens around it, and there are many buildings in the area with good bat roosting potential. The building itself has moderate bat roosting potential.

During the dusk surveys on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, there was a very low level of bat activity observed.

**No bats exited the building.**

No protected species license will be required.

## Location of Site



Figure 1. Location of site circled in red. Grid ref: NO524981. Postcode: AB34 5HD

## Development Proposals

It is proposed to extend the northwest elevation across to the southwestern wall.



## Purpose of Report

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As part of the planning requirements, a bat survey has been requested. This report is supplied in order to:

- Determine the suitability of the building for the habitation of bats.
- Identify the presence or absence of bats in the area, or potential roost area, which may have an impact on the development proposals.
- Species or bat, type of roost and number of bats using the roost (if present)
- Recommend mitigation measures, if required, both prior to commencement of the project and after its completion.

## Data Collection & Survey Methodology

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The site was surveyed by Nigel Astell with the assistance of surveyors as detailed in Appendix F, at dusk on 1<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023.

A desktop study was carried out to determine any other records of bats in the area.

Riverside Lodge, Huntly Place, Aboyne was surveyed, following the guidelines set out in the Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines (along with the Interim Guidance Note, see Appendix D), the CIEEM Bat Mitigation Guidelines, and with Aberdeenshire Guidelines.

### **Preliminary Roost Assessment:**

Equipment used during internal and external inspections included a ladder, binoculars, high power torches, head torches, with an endoscope available for use in any areas unable to be inspected otherwise.

External parts of the building were surveyed, in the area of the proposed extension. The survey looked for evidence of bat use such as faecal pellets, urine staining, scratch marks on slates or rub marks on potential exit/entry points.

The external search inspected holes in walls, gaps behind window frames, cracks and crevices in stonework/brickwork. Gaps between ridge slates and roof slates, broken or lifted roof slates, lifted flashing around any chimney stacks, dormer windows, roof valleys, ridges, wallheads etc. were also inspected, along with any other gaps or crevices which could be utilized by bats.





## Activity Surveys:

Each surveyor watched the building for bats emerging. In addition, all observed bat activity, was recorded, including time, species and any information regarding behaviour, including the direction of flight, and activity type, e.g., foraging/commuting. The dusk surveys were carried out with the use of Echometer Touch bat detecting and recording equipment.

Additionally, night-vision aids (NVAs) in the form of near range infrared video recording equipment (Sony AX53 video camera and Nightfox Whisker) with supplementary infrared floodlights have been integrated into the dusk and dawn surveys.

All recorded bat calls are downloaded and analysed using Kaleidoscope software. Video footage is reviewed and matched to kaleidoscope analysis, where appropriate.

## Survey Constraints

Conclusions relate to conditions found at the time of inspection. Recommendations contained within this report are valid for a period of eighteen months only.

## Breeding Birds

Whilst carrying out the bat PRA and activity surveys, signs of nesting and roosting birds were checked for.

## Assessment of Environment

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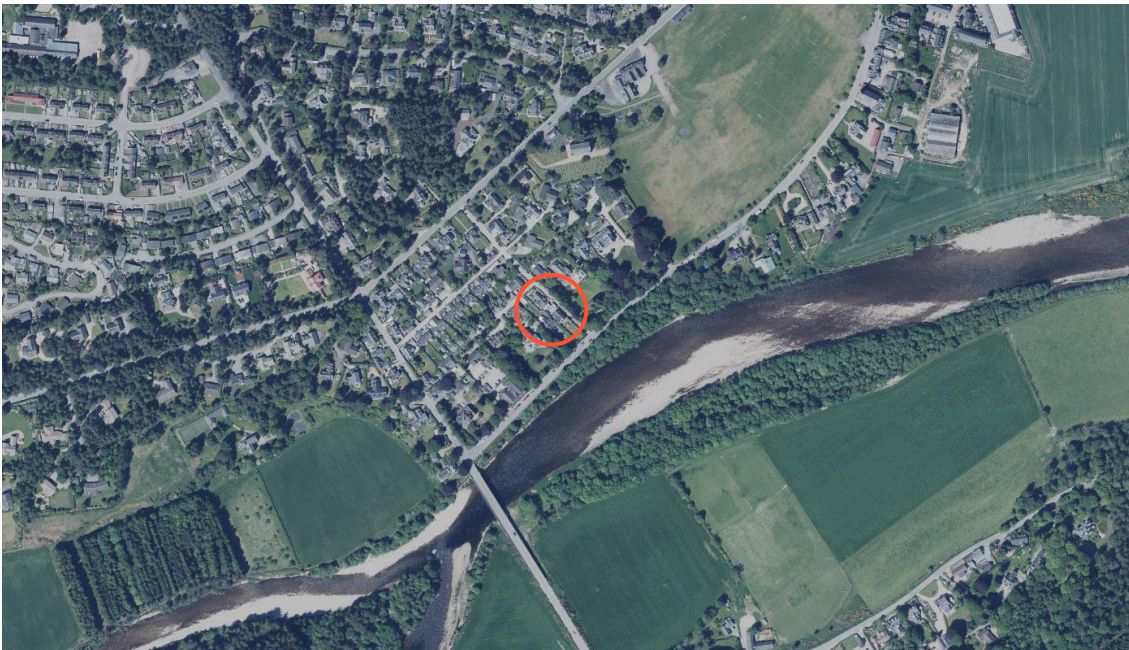


Figure 2. Aerial photograph with site outlined in red.

The River Dee flows 80m to the south of Riverside Lodge, and the riparian habitat provides very good bat foraging. There are mature trees lining the River Dee along with many trees along the roads and in the gardens of Aboyne. There are many traditionally built houses in the area which provide good bat roosting potential.



## Survey Results

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### Desktop Survey

Within 0.5km of the site there have been records of common pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat and brown long-eared bats. Within 2km there have also been records of lesser noctule and soprano pipistrelle.

### Preliminary Roost Assessment

External	The walls are well-sealed with no bat roost potential. The northwest elevation has a newer extension with well-sealed slates and wallheads with no bat roost potential. The roof behind it, which is part of the original building, has some loose and lifted slates with moderate bat roosting potential. The eastern elevation has some loose and lifted slates with moderate bat roost potential. There are dormer windows where some slates have lifted, which also have moderate bat roost potential.
Internal	There is a flat mansard roof with a felt roof and no roof spaces. The original roof has slates and wooden sarking with a very small and inaccessible roof space above the dormers.

See Appendix A for photos detailing the external and internal survey.

### Hibernation Potential

There is no hibernation potential in the building due to the fact the central heating would heat up the roof and would therefore make it unsuitable for bats to hibernate.

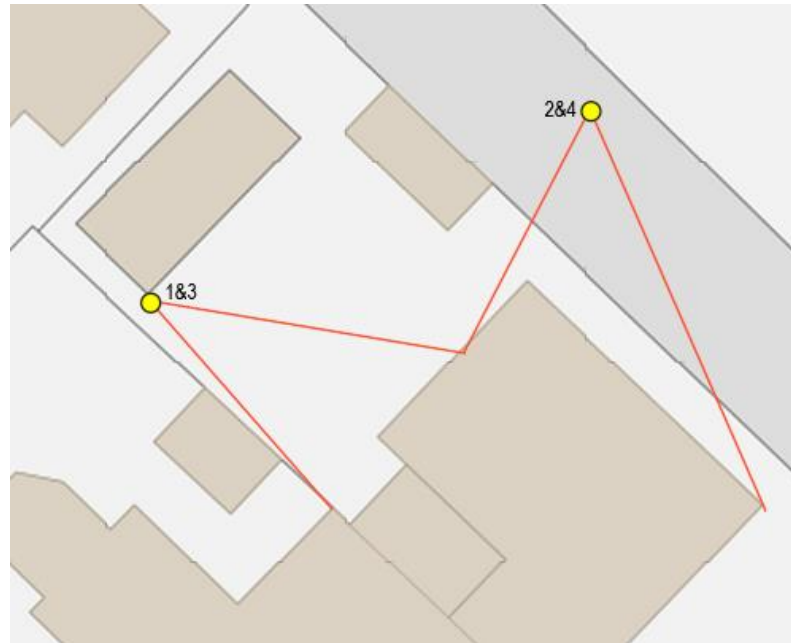


## Emergence Surveys

Date	Survey Start	Sunset / Sunrise	Survey End	Temp	Wind	Cloud Cover	Rain
1/8/2023	21:10	21:25	23:00	13-10°C	3mph	Partly	None
23/8/2023	20:15	20:32	22:05	14°C	8mph	Fair	None

### Observer Positions

Observer positions for the dusk surveys on the 1<sup>st</sup> (1&2) and 23<sup>rd</sup> of August (3&4) 2023.



### Emergence Survey 01 August 2023

IRC = Infrared Camera and NW = Nightfox Whisker. Both are infrared recording devices.

Position 1 (NW1)	There were very low levels of activity. Only four calls were recorded and no bats were seen during the survey. <b>No bats exited the building.</b>
Position 2 (OT+IRC03)	There were low levels of activity. The only bats seen were a soprano pipistrelle foraging along the trees to the southeast at 22:30 and a common pipistrelle foraging around the same trees at 22:44. <b>No bats exited the building.</b>

### Emergence Survey 23 August 2023

Position 3 (IRC03)	There were very low levels of activity with only nine calls recorded and no bats were seen. <b>No bats exited the building.</b>
Position 4 (JB+IRC01)	The first bat was seen at 21:05 where a soprano pipistrelle foraged over the building from the south and then goes south again. After that, a couple of pipistrelles commuted from north to south. <b>No bats exited the building.</b>



## Summary of Bat Passes Recorded

01/08/2023 (dusk)	Myotis species	Pipistrelle			Brown Long-eared
		Nathusius	Common	Soprano	
Position 1 (NW1)	-	-	4	-	-
Position 2 (OT+IRC03)	-	-	4	4	-
23/08/2023 (dusk)					
Position 3 (IRC03)	-	-	7	2	-
Position 4 (JB+IRC01)	-	-	7	2	-

## Interpretation & Evaluation

Riverside Lodge, Aboyne has very good bat foraging habitat around it, with the River Dee in close proximity. There are many buildings with good bat roosting potential in the area.

During the dusk emergence surveys on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2023, a very low level of bat activity was observed. There were only a few brief glimpses of bats commuting overhead and foraging to the south.

**No bats exited the building during either survey.**

No protected species license will be required.

## Impact Assessment & Mitigation

As no bats were using the building for roosting, the proposed restoration and extension of the building will not impact on the bat population in the area and no mitigation is necessary.

*Note: While this survey found no evidence of bats roosting in the building, this is no guarantee that bats will not come to use the building, and builders should be alert to the possibility of bats when working on the roof area of the building.*

*If bats are found work should stop immediately, and the Licensed Bat Worker (01224 734372) contacted. Any bats found should not be handled unless necessary (e.g. if it is on the ground, on an outside wall or in an exposed area where it could be vulnerable). If bats need to be moved, they should be handled carefully, using gloves or a towel and should be put safely in a cardboard box or cotton bag and kept quiet until advice is received.*





## Appendix A: External Photos



Photo 1: Northwestern elevation where new extension is proposed to be added. Slate roof is mostly well-sealed with low bat roost potential (BRP). The original roof behind it has a higher quantity of loose and lifted slated and moderate BRP.



Photo 2: Eastern elevation with BRP at areas of loose and lifted slates. Wallheads are well-sealed with no BRP.

### Darkest Point of Survey Photos



Position 1



Position 2



Position 3



Position 4



## Appendix B: Bats in Scotland

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Bats are nocturnal animals which roost all day, huddled together in dark sheltered places. At dusk they will leave their roosts and forage. All British bats primarily feed on invertebrates, with most of their diet consisting of flies, beetles and moths. Bats therefore prefer to forage in areas with a high insect population such as woodlands, scrub, wetlands, river corridors and flower rich grasslands.

Bats use different roosts during different times of year, and for different purposes. A bat colony will generally return to the same roosts year after year.

Bats hibernate over winter in a communal roost and generally remain inside from autumn to spring, although some can be drawn out of hibernation by a moderately high midday temperature or a mild night, when a temperature of 40°F (4.5°C) is sufficient to wake them and bring them out for an hour's hunt. Winter roosts are typically caves, mines, buildings and hollow trees which have constant low temperatures and high humidity.

In spring, the bats may use alternative roost sites which are used during the day.

By summer the female bats will be found at a maternity roost where they will give birth and suckle young. Preferred sites for a maternity roost are hollow trees, buildings and bridges.

## Appendix C: Bats and the Law

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Because populations of most species have declined in past decades, all British bats have been protected by law since 1981. The legal protection they receive has been strengthened by changes to the law arising from European Union obligations which have remained in force post-Brexit.

All bat species are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations, 1994. This legislation makes it illegal to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or disturb bats, or destroy their roosts. It is therefore essential to establish whether the works being proposed will affect bats or their roosts.

This bat survey confirms to the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines (2016). An Interim Guidance Note was published by the Bat Conservation Trust in May 2022, which describes that the use of night vision aids (NVAs) will be standard protocol per the 4<sup>th</sup> edition. NVAs should be phased in over the two years following this note, but are not mandatory at present.



## Appendix D: Bat Licensing

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Much bat work can be carried out without a licence. Survey planning, bat detection and looking for signs of bat presence do not require a licence. A licence is only needed once it has been established that there are bats present.

A licence is required by anyone needing to disturb, take, or possess bats for either scientific or survey purposes.

Further advice is available from the  
Bat Conservation Trust, [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk) and  
NatureScot [www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot)

## Appendix E Surveyor Qualifications

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Nigel Astell has a BSc Botany (Hons) and a BSc Zoology (Ord). He is a member of the Arboricultural Association and CIEEM. He has attended BCT training courses, CIEEM bat training courses and bat training courses with Echoes Ecology. He has been carrying out bat surveys since 2005. Bat Roost Survey License No 126577.

James Bellis has a Bsc in Animal Biology from the University of Stirling and has been trained on a CIEEM bat surveying course. He has been assisting with bat surveys since 2017 and is working towards becoming a licensed bat surveyor.

Owen Thorogood has a BSc in Biomedical Science from Dundee University and has been trained on a CIEEM bat surveying course. He has been assisting with bat surveys since 2017.

## Appendix F: Contact Details

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