

ROTHERHAM TOP FARM, CHORLEY

Nocturnal Bat Survey Report

September 2023



Report Control Sheet

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1.	SCOPE & PURPOSE	4
1.2.	LOCATION	4
1.3.	OBJECTIVES	4
2	METHODOLOGY	5
2.1.	NOCTURNAL BAT SURVEY	5
2.2.	SURVEY LIMITATIONS	5
3	SURVEY RESULTS	6
3.1.	DUSK SURVEY (28/09/23)	6
3.2.	ASSESSMENT	6
4	RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION	7
4.1.	PRECAUTIONARY WORKING METHODS	7
4.2.	LIGHTING MITIGATION	7
5	BIBLIOGRAPHY	8

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Primrose Holdings to undertake a nocturnal bat survey at the site at Rotherham Top Farm, Preston Road, Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley, PR6 7PG. This report has been produced to inform a planning application at the site.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Caitlin O'Connor, Assistant Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. The project has been managed and overseen by Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), MEnvSc, CEnv. Director and Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental. Olivia is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning permission. Olivia holds a Class 1 Natural England Bat Licence and is experienced assessing sites for bat roosting potential.

1.1.3. A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken of the site in September 2023 by Collington Winter Environmental which found B1 and the stone wall within B2 to provide low bat roosting potential. Therefore, one nocturnal emergence survey was recommended, the results of which are detailed in this report.

1.2. LOCATION

1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the approximate site location. The site is in Whittle-le-Woods, a village and civil parish of the Borough of Chorley in Lancashire.

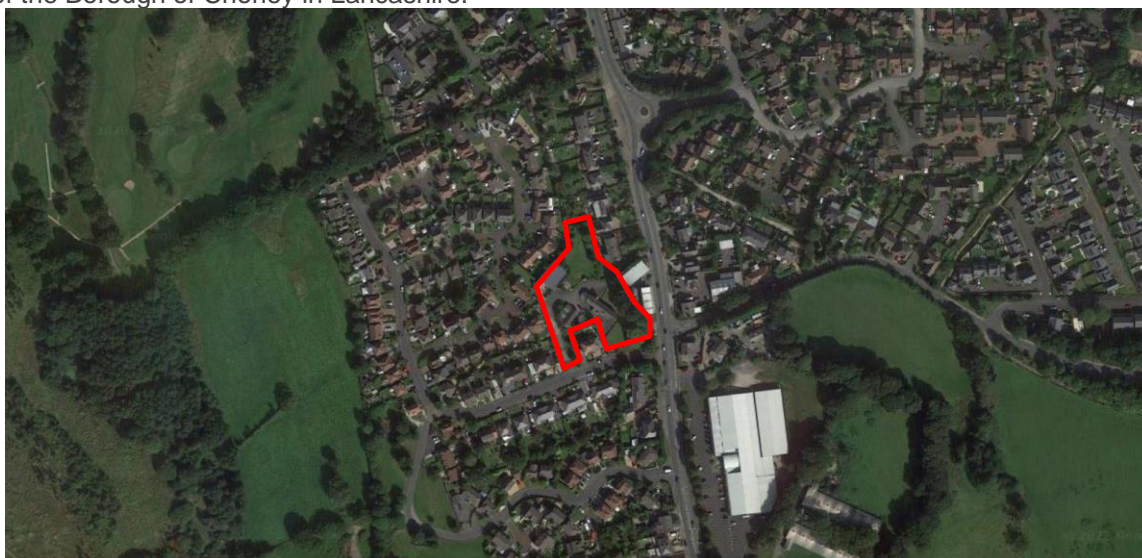


Figure 1.1 Site Location

1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. The objectives of the Nocturnal Bat Survey are as follows:

- Identify any bats roosting within the buildings.
- Assess the value of the buildings for roosting bats.
- Identify the species assemblage of bats using the site.
- Provide recommendations on any further surveys or mitigation required for bats.

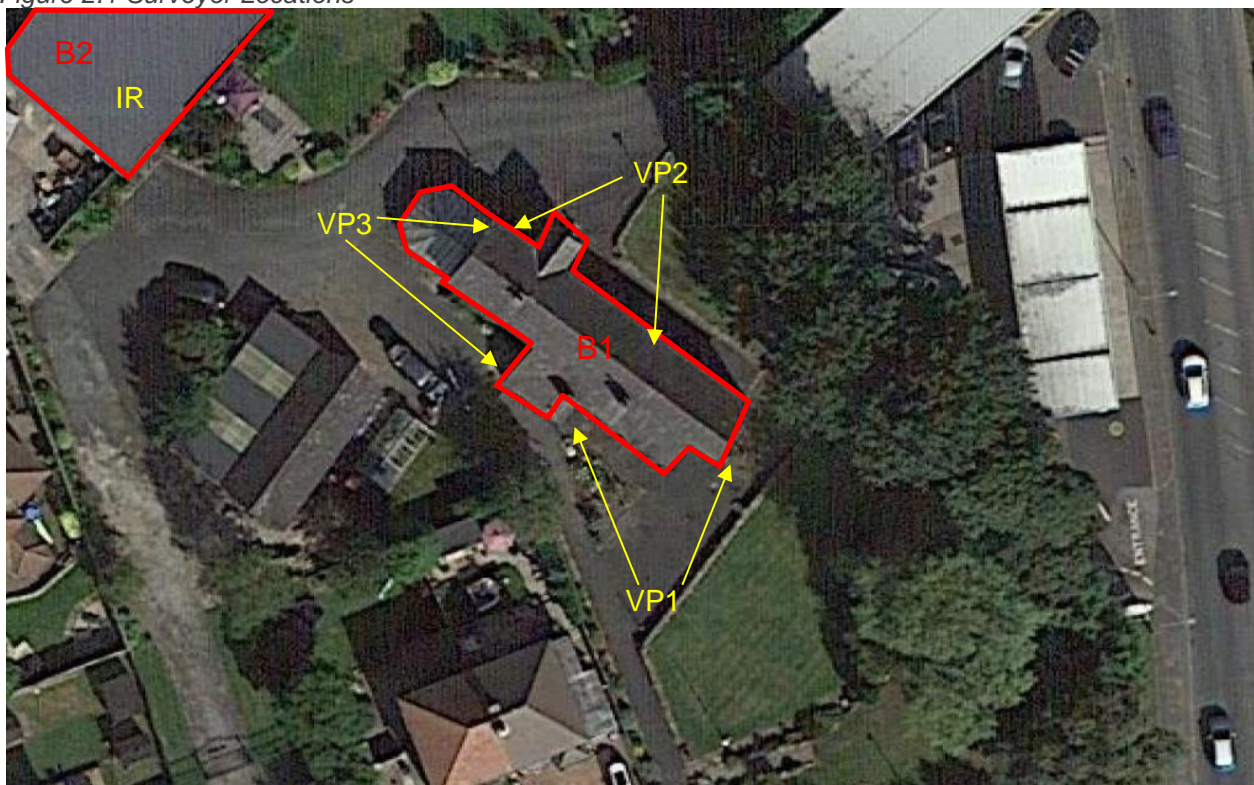
2 METHODOLOGY

2.1. NOCTURNAL BAT SURVEY

2.1.1. The nocturnal survey was undertaken as a dusk survey on 27th September 2023 by three qualified surveyors.

2.1.2. Please refer to Figure 2.1 for locations of vantage points used during the survey.

Figure 2.1 Surveyor Locations



2.1.3. The surveys were undertaken in line with guidance as set out in Collins (2023). Surveyors used handheld bat detectors and a NightFox Red Infrared Camera (IR on Figure 2.1). All surveyors were suitably experienced undertaking bat emergence surveys. Please refer to Table 2.1 below for details of surveyors.

Table 2.1 Survey Details

Date	Sunset/ Sunrise Time	Start	Finish	Surveyors	Weather Conditions
27/09/2023	18:58	18:43	20:28	VP1 – Samuel Penrhyn Lowe VP2 – Michael Boucher VP3 – Joshua Dixon	Temp at start/end: 15 Celsius Cloud cover: 8 Wind: 5 max (Beaufort scale) Precipitation: Rain beginning at approximately 18:50 and lasting for 20 minutes.

2.2. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

2.2.1. Due to the surveys being conducted by observation during low light conditions, this may cause constraint of visual assessments. No surveyors were visually constrained during the survey, other than that of low light conditions, and all potential roosting features were observed throughout the survey time period.

2.2.2. The weather during the survey was suboptimal due to precipitation at the beginning of the survey. Furthermore, September is a suboptimal time to conduct nocturnal bat surveys on buildings with 'low' bat roosting potential as this misses the maternity season for many bat species. These constraints have been considered within the report.

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1. DUSK SURVEY (28/09/23)

3.1.1. No bats were identified by any of the vantage points during the survey emerging from the building. Furthermore, no bats were observed foraging or commuting within the wider area. No audible echolocations were heard on the surveyor's handheld detectors and no bats were identified on the Nightfox Red Infrared Camera.

3.1.2. **No roost locations were observed throughout the survey.**

3.2. ASSESSMENT

3.2.1. No bat activity was recorded during the survey and no roosts were identified.

3.2.2. The temperature was well within that recommended in the BCT's Best Practice Guidelines. However, the survey was undertaken in September which is considered suboptimal for buildings assessed as having '**low**' bat roosting potential.

3.2.3. Due to no bat roosts being located on site, no further licences or surveys are required to proceed with the proposed development. However, **it is recommended that a series of Precautionary Working Methods are followed during the proposed works to mitigate for the limitations encountered during the survey and minimise the risk of breaching relevant wildlife legislation.**

4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

4.1. PRECAUTIONARY WORKING METHODS

4.1.1. Based on the survey data, no bats were identified roosting. However due to the survey constraints, it is recommended that the following Precautionary Working Methods (PWMs) are to be undertaken under the supervision of a licenced bat ecologist to reduce the risk of killing or injuring any bats that may be affected during proposed works on the roof:

- All contractors working on the site will be briefed with a Toolbox Talk by the licenced ecologist, on the legal protection afforded to bats and their roosts, and on how to proceed if a bat is discovered during the course of the work.
- The licenced ecologist will attend site on the day of the scheduled works to undertake a search for bats in relation to the potential roosting features identified during the PEA (Collington Winter Environmental, 2023) prior to the works commencing. PRFs to be inspected include lifted tiles along the western aspect of the building. If any bats are located, all works will cease, and Natural England is to be contacted immediately and a licence to be obtained.

4.1.2. Once the selected features have been removed under supervision, works can proceed in the absence of the licenced ecologist, at their discretion. If a bat is discovered at any unsupervised time, work must cease immediately, and a licenced bat handler must be called for advice. This advice will include leaving the bat to disperse of its own accord or wait for the licenced ecologist to move the bat. Builders and contractors are explicitly forbidden from handling bats except in the case of finding a trapped or injured bat. In which case the bat may be moved into a safe and secure place (e.g. a box) and the registered ecologist must be contacted immediately.

4.2. LIGHTING MITIGATION

4.2.1. All bats have some degree of sensitivity to artificial, night-time lighting. Introducing artificial lighting to areas that are not currently illuminated may sever important bat flight lines and discourage bats from using roost provisions. It is recommended external lighting is not to be provided on the building to ensure roosting bats are not impacted by introduced lighting.

4.2.2. It is advised that a light mitigation plan is produced to assess the pre- and post-development changes in lighting and to advise on an appropriately sensitive lighting scheme as part of the development.

4.2.3. Due to known records of bats within the local area (particularly pipistrelles), crevice dwelling bat boxes could be installed as an ecological enhancement for the site.

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