

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment	
For:	GR Planning and Architectural Design Ltd
Site:	Land Rear of 48 Retford Road, Blyth, Worksop, S81 8HB
Report Date:	18 th March 2024
Report Reference:	SQ-1719

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Client:	GR Planning and Architectural Design Ltd
Site Name:	Land Rear of 48 Retford Road, Blyth, Worksop, S81 8HB
Central Grid Reference:	SK 62916 86888
Report:	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment
Date of survey:	15 th March 2024
Surveyed by:	Natasha Estrada BSc (hons), MRes, MCIEEM <i>Natural England Bat Licence: 2015-12231-CLS-CLS</i>

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2	n/a	FINAL	18 th March 2024	Sam Toon BSc (hons) Estrada Ecology Ltd	Natasha Estrada MRes, MCIEEM, Estrada Ecology Ltd

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The contents of this report have been produced with due consideration of current best practice guidance, and in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct and the Bat Conservation Trust Bat, Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition (2023).

This report should not be submitted as part of a planning application without any accompanying species-specific reports which may have been recommended herein.

Data within this report is valid for a maximum of eighteen months from the date of the survey. After this period, an updated site visit will be required to determine a new ecological baseline.

Summary

The survey was commissioned to assess land to the rear of 48 Retford Road, Blyth, Worksop, S81 8HB (hereby referred to as 'the site') for its potential to support features which could be utilised by bats for roosting, and / or as a place of shelter.

During the daytime inspection, no field sign evidence synonymous with bats was recorded around the exterior or within internal areas of either of the barns. No suitable features were present which were deemed to offer suitability for use by bats for roosting or as a place of shelter on the exterior and interior of the buildings.

For the purposes of assessment, the barns within the site have both been categorised as offering negligible suitability for use by bats, when surveyed by a licensed bat ecologist with due consideration to Collins (2023). No further survey effort is deemed necessary.

Historical evidence suggesting the use of the wooden barn by nesting birds was recorded, identified as swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). Further recommendations have been made herein. No evidence to suggest use by Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) was recorded during the survey.

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1 Introduction and Background to the Site

- 1.1 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was requested by the client for the stable buildings at Land Rear of 48 Retford Road, Blyth, Worksop, S81 8HB to assess the structure for its ecological value and to identify any features which bats could utilise as a potential roost or place of shelter. Furthermore, an assessment of the buildings suitability to support breeding birds was undertaken.
- 1.2 The property is located within the Blyth area of Worksop, approximately 9.6 km northwest of Retford town centre. The central OS grid reference is recorded as SK 62916 86888.
- 1.3 The site comprises of two barns; a stable block comprising solely of a wooden frame with pitched bitumen lined roof, and a small barn to the south, comprising of breezeblock base and corrugated metal walls and roof.
- 1.4 The wider landscape surrounding the site is dominated by residential housing with scattered inclusions of small amenity greenspace and residential gardens. Further from the site to the south and southeast lies agricultural land, pockets of woodland and waterbodies, namely, the river Ryton.
- 1.5 Under current proposals, it is understood that the main existing barn is to be demolished with a new dwelling to be built, subject to necessary planning consent.

Figure 1: The Survey Site Within its Wider Location.



Google Maps (2024)

2 Protected Species Legislation

- 2.1 All species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 2.2 The Regulations prohibit: the deliberate killing, injuring, or taking of bats; the deliberate disturbance of any bat species in such a way as to be significantly likely to affect:
 - their ability of to survive, hibernate, migrate, breed, or rear or nurture their young, or the local distribution or abundance of that species,
 - damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (roost), or,
 - the possession or transport of bats or any other part thereof.

- 2.3 Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion in Schedule 5.
- 2.4 Under the Act, they are protected from: intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level); obstruction of access to any place of shelter, breeding, or rest; selling, bartering or exchange of these species, or parts of.
- 2.5 Seven British bat species are listed as Species of Principle Importance (SPI) under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. These are: barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long eared (*Plecotus auritus*), greater horseshoe (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), and lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*).
- 2.6 Under the National Planning Policy Framework, the presence of any protected species is a material planning consideration. The Framework states that impacts arising from development proposals must be avoided where possible, or adequately mitigated / compensated for, and that opportunities for ecological enhancement should be sought.
- 2.7 Under certain circumstances, a licence may be granted by Natural England to permit activities that would otherwise constitute an offence. In relation to development, a scheme must have full planning permission before a licence application can be made.
- 2.8 Relevant legislation includes the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which states that all birds, their nests, and eggs are protected by law. Special considerations of Schedule 1 birds and European Protected Species should be made.

3 Survey Methodology

3.1 Site survey

- 3.1.1 An examination of the buildings was undertaken in order to identify any suitable features that have the potential to be used by bats for roosting or as a place of shelter. Any evidence suggesting the use of the building by bat or breeding birds was also noted.

3.1.2 The quality of on-site habitats was then categorised based on the classification criteria in 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists' (Collins, 2023). Classification criteria is presented below:

- **Negligible:** No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
- **Low:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
- **Moderate:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status
- **High:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts (e.g., maternity, or classic cool / stable hibernation site).

3.2 Timing

3.2.1 The survey was conducted on the 15th of March 2024, which is a viable period to conduct preliminary roost assessments but outside the recognised bat activity season.

3.3 Personnel

3.3.1 The survey was undertaken by experienced ecologist Natasha Estrada (Natural England Bat Licence 2015-12231-CLS-CLS); full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM), a licenced bat ecologist for over twenty years, and the named ecologist on several EPS Mitigation Licences in respect of several bat species.

3.4 Limitations

3.4.1 An absence of species records returned by the data search results does not provide confirmation that a species is absent from within the site or the search area.

3.4.2 Every effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this report and its contents. However, in view of potential ecological constraints to development, or the likely presence or absence of species, it must only be viewed as a snapshot in time and not be viewed as definitive. Due to external factors, such as seasonality, weather etc, having the potential to affect survey results, no liability can be assumed for omissions or changes that may or may not occur after the date this report was produced.

3.4.3 All areas of the buildings were accessible for survey.

4 Survey and Site Assessment

4.1 Site Survey

4.1.1 The site at the rear of 48 Retford Road, comprised of two barns; the northernmost barn, a stable block comprises wooden walls and a bitumen lined roof, with the southern barn comprising of a breezeblock base and corrugated metal walls and roof covering.

4.1.2 **Metal Barn:** The southern barn within the site, comprised of a red breezeblock base which extended approximately a meter from the ground. Corrugated metal then continued to form the main construction of the barn on all elevations including the roof.

Figure 2: Barns within the site

- 4.1.3 A flat corrugated metal roof was present, which displayed a small gap between the roofing metal and the metal at the top of the barn walls, which recorded suitable gaps in which, access could be gained to the internals by bats and breeding birds. However, given the exposed edges of the metal, this feature is deemed suboptimal for bat access and egress.
- 4.1.4 Two external lights were mounted on the western elevation of the barn. These were confirmed as being motion sensor operated lighting and were functional at the time of survey, likely resulting in splay across the western aspect and beyond.
- 4.1.5 A large metal roller door was recorded on the western elevation of the metal barn, which was open during the survey to permit internal inspection. However, it was confirmed by the landowner, that the door remains closed at all times during evening hours. When closed, the door is well sealed and offers no access potential to either breeding birds or bats.
- 4.1.6 The internals of the metal barn were surveyed in full. The barn was recorded as being used for storage, with multiple items recorded. All accessible items and areas were inspected using a high-powered torch to inspect for field signs pertaining to bats. The wooden roofing beams were recorded as running flush to the corrugated sheeting and all areas of blockwork were recorded as sealed offering no roost suitability.
- 4.1.7 No field sign evidence in relation to bats was recorded within any section of the barn. Furthermore, the barn recorded hostile construction materials which were deemed sub-optimal for bats to utilise. No potential roosting features were recorded. It was also noted rats had at some point had been

using the interior of the barn, the presence of which could provide an elevated predation risk to any bats in situ. The metal barn recorded no evidence of historical or active breeding birds.

4.1.8 For the purpose of this assessment, when considering the construction of the barn and lack of suitable roosting features, the metal barn recorded within the site was deemed to provide negligible roosting potential for roosting bats. No further assessment is deemed necessary at this juncture.

Figure 3: Metal Barn



4.1.9 Stable **Block:** A second barn was recorded within the site, comprising of wooden walls, wooden roof with bitumen lining and windows which were recorded as being intact.

4.1.10 The walls of the barn were recorded as being in good condition, with no damage recorded within any section of the lapped timber. The walls were inspected for fields signs pertaining to bats; however, none were recorded.

- 4.1.11 The roof recorded a double pitch profile with bitumen lining. The lining was intact throughout and tacked to the wood beneath. The roof was recorded in good condition with no warping of the bitumen or wood recorded.
- 4.1.12 Two external lights were recorded on the western elevation of the barn which were confirmed as being on at all times during the evening for security purposes. This was deemed to provide a limiting factor for bats in relation to utilisation of the site given the luminaire type.
- 4.1.13 The internals of the barn were inspected in full and were recorded as being in use as a stable for equine livestock and equipment. No suitable features which bats could utilise were recorded within the wooden barn. The wooden ceiling was entirely intact with wooden beams and ridge beam running flush to the wood. Some partitions between adjacent stalls were recorded as being blocked with mesh preventing access. Furthermore, lighting within the stable block is present and given the nature of the structures use, is likely to be on during evening hours. No field sign evidence pertaining to bats was recorded within any section of the stable block.
- 4.1.14 For the purpose of this assessment, when considering the stable block and lack of suitable roosting features, it was recorded as providing negligible roost suitability when assessed by two licensed ecologists. No further assessment is deemed necessary at this juncture.
- 4.1.15 Two nests were recorded internally within the stable block, identified as swallow. The nests were inactive and appeared to be defunct due to signs of damage. Further recommendations have been made herein.

Figure 4: Wooden Barn



Figure 5: Swallow Nest



4.2 Assessment of Site and Surrounding Habitats

- 4.2.1 The site is likely subject to higher levels of artificial lighting. Both external and internal artificial lighting was recorded on the surveyed barns, with the stable block recording external lighting on constantly throughout the evening and night and other external lighting on a motion sensor.
- 4.2.2 The site is considered not suitable to support any major foraging or commuting habitat for use by local bat populations. No physical encroachment of suitable commuting / foraging habitat is expected via the proposed works on the building.

4.3 Existing Information on Bats in the Local / Regional Area

- 4.3.1 Consultation would suggest that bats are generally common in the wider area but under recorded.
- 4.3.2 Records pertaining to bats were commissioned from Nottinghamshire Biological Records Centre for a 2 km radius from the site central grid reference. In total, thirty-one records were returned which relate to bats. These are comprised of:
- Thirteen records for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), dated between 2016 and 2017.
 - Six records for common noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), dated between 2016 and 2017.
 - Five records for Soprano Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) dated 2016.
 - One record for brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), dated 2016.
 - And six records for unspecified bat species, dated between 2003 and 2016.
- 4.3.3 None of the above records pertain to the site. The closest record returned is a common pipistrelle observation, approximately five-hundred meters south of the site.
- 4.3.4 Consultation with Magic Map returned no European Protected Species Mitigation Licences granted within a 2 km radius from the central site grid reference which relate to bats.

5 Survey Results

5.1 Inspection survey

5.1.1 With consideration to the lack of features recorded internally and externally on either structure, the barns at land to the rear of 48 Retford Road are both deemed to offer negligible suitability for roosting or sheltering bats, as assessed by a licenced bat ecologist (2015-12231-CLS-CLS). No further survey effort is therefore deemed necessary at this juncture.

5.1.2 The wooden stable block within the site, recorded historical evidence of nesting birds, namely, swallow with the presence of two swallow nests. Recommendations for precautionary methods are provided within the conclusion of this report.

5.1.3 The site is deemed to offer negligible suitability for use by barn owl for breeding and no signs of occasional roost use were recorded. No impacts are predicted at this juncture.

5.2 Landscape Assessment

5.2.1 The immediate surroundings of the site are of higher levels of artificial light, due to the site being well lit. The wider environment was deemed to offer moderate suitability for use by local bats for foraging or commuting, however, the habitats within the site were limited, with lighting considered to be high directly adjacent to the buildings. Whilst habitats suitable for use by local bat populations are present within the general Blyth area, they are at a distance from the surveyed site.

5.2.2 The site itself is not comprised of any habitats suitable for bat commuting / foraging activity. No physical encroachment on habitats suitable for use by local bat populations is expected via the proposals.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Bats

6.1.1 The wooden and metal barns have been deemed to offer negligible suitability for use by bats, as assessed by a licenced bat ecologist (2015-12231-CLS-CLS). The assessment of the barns was completed in full for both external and internal inspections. No further bat activity surveys have been deemed necessary.

6.1.2 No habitats with the potential to function as commuting / foraging grounds exist within the site and non will be affected by the proposed works on the building.

6.2 Breeding birds

6.2.1 The wooden barn within the site, recorded historical evidence of nesting birds, namely, swallow with the presence of two swallow nests. Recommendations for precautionary methods are provided within the conclusion of this report.

6.2.2 It is recommended, where feasible, works on the building should be undertaken outside the breeding bird season to avoid potential impacts towards breeding birds. The breeding bird season typically runs from March to September, inclusive.

6.2.3 Should these timings not be feasible, then precautionary working methods to mitigate potential impacts towards birds using the structure are recommended. If any evidence of nests, building as nests, breeding, or attempting to breed, then works should cease and a suitably qualified ecologist consulted. Works should not resume until an ecologist has given the go ahead for works to proceed.

6.2.4 Post development, artificial nest boxes for Swallow should be incorporated within the scheme design to ensure continued nesting sites for the species within the plot.

Preliminary Roost Assessment:

Land Rear of 48 Retford Road

Blyth

Worksop

S81 8HB

March 2024

References:

Collins, J. (2023). Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition.

Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night - Guidance Note GN08/23.

