



BAT SURVEY REPORT DERBY STREET, LEEK

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. Ecology Elements Ltd was commissioned by Mr Andrew Carter to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) and subsequent bat surveys of 14 Derby Street, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 7AB (National Grid Reference: SJ9843256457).
- 1.1.2. The surveys were commissioned to inform a planning application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to repair, refurbish and convert the existing building into three residential units.
- 1.1.3. The aim of the surveys was to:
- Undertake a PBRA of all bat roost features which have the potential to be impacted by the proposed works, to identify the suitability to support roosting bat;
 - Undertake the required number of emergence and/or re-entry surveys to identify the presence/likely absence of roosting bat within the site. Where roosts were recorded, the species, number of bats and type of roost are also identified; and
 - To use the results of the above surveys to assess any potential impacts of the proposed development upon roosting bat (should they be present) and to recommend suitable mitigation measures, where required.

1.2. Site Context

- 1.2.1. The area of ecological study, hereafter referred to as the “Site”, consists of a two-storey former industrial building located in the centre of Leek town. The building is surrounded by commercial and industrial units and transport infrastructure associated with Leek High Street and town centre. Refer to Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 - Site Location Plan (Source: Bing Maps, 2024)

1.3. Site Proposals

- 1.3.1. The proposed works to convert the existing building into residential dwellings will include a level of demolition and rebuild works.
- 1.3.2. The building as a whole is comprised of several smaller buildings, which have previously been converted into a single unit. The unit is roughly L-shaped and can be divided into two main areas; west facing (Area A) and north facing (Area B), as shown on Figure 2 below.
- 1.3.3. Area A comprises the main façade of the building, facing west onto the large courtyard, whereas Area B is the more northerly section of the building. The demolition and rebuild works will occur to Area A only. This will include the demolition of the west facing wall (which has begun to bow), as well as the damaged roof. There are no works proposed to the roof of Area B, with internal works only including the refurbishment and partial replacement of the windows.
- 1.3.4. Any potential impacting works will therefore only occur within Area A of the building. As a result, the surveys and report will focus on Area A of the building only.



Figure 2: Different areas of the building

1.4. Legislation

1.4.1. Bats and their roosts are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, this legislation means that it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure, or kill a wild bat;
- Deliberately disturb wild bats¹;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by this species.

1.4.2. Protection is also afforded under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) with respect to disturbance of animals when using places of shelter and obstruction of access to places of shelter.

1.4.3. Certain species of bats, including noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are also listed as a Species of Principal Importance (SPI) under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

¹ disturbance of animals includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate; or affects the local distribution or abundance of the species.

- 1.4.4. Under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) public bodies (including local planning authorities) have a duty to have regard for the conservation of SPI when carrying out their functions, including determining planning applications.
- 1.4.5. In Staffordshire, noctule, soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* were previously listed as species of importance and each had its own Action Plan. More recently, Staffordshire has been divided into 14 Ecosystem Action Plan prioritising conservation management at a Landscape Level. The Site falls under the Species Rich Farmland Ecosystem Action Plan which lists brown long-eared, noctule and pipistrelle bats as priority species.

1.5. Quality Assurance & Environmental Management

- 1.5.1. The lead Ecologist holds a Natural England Bat Licence (Licence ref: 2016-22617-CLS-CLS) and is an associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and are therefore bound by its code of professional conduct.
- 1.5.2. This report has been produced with reference to current guidelines including *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023) and British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BSI, 2013).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Desk Study

2.1.1. The desk study was informed by review of existing available information that included:

- MAGIC – a web-based interactive mapping system. Priority habitats, ancient woodland, statutory conservation sites and issued European Protected Species (EPS) licences were searched for within a 2km radius of the Site.
- Aerial mapping and ordnance survey maps were reviewed to gain contextual habitat information on the presence and connectivity of semi-natural habitats and the Site.

2.2. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

2.2.1. The PBRA was undertaken by Michael Bryant MA, BSc (Hons) ACIEEM (NE Licence ref: 2016-22617-CLS-CLS) on the 01st of May 2024. The assessment was completed in line with *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023).

2.2.2. The building was inspected externally and internally for potential access/egress points, potential roosting features and for field signs of roosting bats. Signs of roosting bats includes droppings, scratch marks, urine stains, feeding remains and for bats themselves. The survey was aided with a high-powered torch and close focusing binoculars.

2.2.3. The building was assessed in line with the guidance, to determine its suitability for roosting bats, as described in Table 2.1, below.

Table 2.1: Roost Suitability Categorisation (based on Table 4.1 from Collins, 2023)

Suitability	Description
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 potential for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only).
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^a and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.

^a for example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels and disturbance levels

2.3. Nocturnal Surveys

- 2.3.1. The nocturnal surveys were completed in line with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023 and Interim Guidance Note: Use of night vision aids for bat emergence surveys and further comment on dawn surveys (Bat Conservation Trust, 2022).
- 2.3.2. The main building was assessed to have 'high' suitability during the PBRA; therefore three survey visits were completed between May and June 2024. All surveys were undertaken during optimal weather conditions, detailed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Survey Details

Visit Number	Visit 1		Visit 2		Visit 3	
Date	14 th May 2024		04 th June 2024		26 th June 2024	
Sunset/Sunrise	20:59hrs		21:28hrs		21:40hrs	
	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish
Time	20:40hrs	22:30hrs	21:10hrs	22:45hrs	21:20hrs	23:00hrs
Temp	14	14	9	8	22	22
Wind	10mph	9mph	13mph	10mph	2mph	2mph
Precipitation	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry
Cloud	400%	85%	0%	0%	75%	60%

- 2.3.3. The surveys focused on the external features identified as having potential for access / egress and roosting opportunities, with three experienced surveyors positioned to provide adequate coverage around the building, as shown on Figure 3.
- 2.3.4. All surveys were led by Michael Bryant MA, BSc (Hons) ACIEEM (NE Licence ref: 2016-22617-CLS-CLS) or Emily Macfarlan MS, BSc (Hons) ACIEEM (NE Licence ref: 2021-52065-CLS-CLS).
- 2.3.5. The emergence surveys began 15 minutes before sunset and ended at least 1.5 hours after sunset.
- 2.3.6. Bat activity was recorded using EchoMeter Touch 2 Pros on electronic devices. Night vision aids (NVAs) were also set up on each visit to assist with the surveys and record evidence of emerging/re-entering bats. The equipment specifications were:

Infra-red:

- 1No. Canon XA15 Compact Full HD Camcorder with IR settings used in conjunction with 1No. 96pcs High Power LED IR Illuminator (Visits 2 and 3)
- 1No. Canon XA35 Compact Full HD Camcorder with IR settings used in conjunction with 1No. 180pcs High Power LED IR Illuminator (Visits 1 and 3)

- 1No. Nightfox Swift 2 Pro (Goggles) 940nm and 850nm with a 1920x1080 digital sensor resolution (Visits 1, 2 and 3)

Thermal:

- 1No. HikMikro Gryphon Pro LRF 35mm GQ35L Thermal and Optical Bi-Spectrum FUSION monocular 640 x 512px (50Hz) (Visits 2 and 3)
- 1No. Pulsar Helion 2 XP50 <40mK Thermal Scope with a 640x480 17um thermal sensor F1.2 lens (50Hz) (Visits 1 – 3)
- Pixfra Arc A613 13mm Thermal Imagine Monocular 640x512, 12µm, <30mK NETD thermal sensor F1.0 lens (Visits 1 and 2)



Figure 3: Surveyor and equipment locations in relation to the building

2.4. Nomenclature

- 2.4.1. The scientific and common names of fauna species is provided in the first citation, with common names being used thereafter.

2.5. Caveats and Limitations

- 2.5.1. All surveys were conducted at an appropriate time of year and during optimal weather conditions. There are no limitations to the surveys.

- 2.5.2. Access to the eastern facing aspect of Area As roof was restricted. An NVA was positioned within Area B of the building and utilised a large open window to view most of the east facing aspect of the roof. As a result, the northeast corner of this section of roof was obscured from view. Owing to the height of the building and proximity of adjacent buildings, it was not possible to view this section of the building.
- 2.5.3. The behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to characteristics recorded in current scientific literature. This report, therefore, cannot predict with absolute certainty that animal species will occur in apparently suitable locations or habitats or that they will not occur in locations or habitats that appear unsuitable.
- 2.5.4. This report has been compiled based on the evidence collected during the survey visits and the species knowledge and professional experience of the surveyor. Whilst the report presents the outcomes of the survey as accurately as possible it must be noted that bats are wild animals and mobile, moving regularly from site to site, therefore their absence as detailed in this report does not preclude their future use of the site, particularly should the condition of the property change.
- 2.5.5. Standard methodologies have been used, which are accepted by Natural England and other statutory conservation bodies. No responsibility will be accepted where these methodologies fail to identify all species on site. Ecology Elements Ltd cannot take responsibility where government, national bodies or industry subsequently modify standards.
- 2.5.6. The weather conditions were considered to be appropriate for the survey and did not pose a constraint.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Desk Study

- 3.1.1. A review of existing EPS Licences for bats was undertaken using Natural England's MAGIC MAP facility. Three mitigation licences were identified, including a licence to allow the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and noctule bats (2019-2024); to allow the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle (2010-2012); and a licence for common pipistrelle data 2014 (although no further details were provided for this licence. The closest EPS Licence for bats was circa 610m west of the Site.

3.2. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA)

Building Description

- 3.2.1. The building is a vacant Victorian property located within Leek Town Centre. Constructed from brick and mortar, the building is two-story with a tiled roof covering. The building is located along the eastern edge of a large, well-lit courtyard, shared by several residential cottages and commercial entities. There is a smaller courtyard to the rear of the building, bordered by two-storey external walls on all sides.
- 3.2.2. The building is comprised of several smaller buildings, which have previously been converted into a single unit. The unit is roughly L-shaped and can be divided into two main areas; west facing (Area A) and north facing (Area B), as shown on Figure 2.
- 3.2.3. Area A comprises the main façade of the building, facing west onto the large courtyard and includes numerous windows on both levels. Three of the windows have no glazing but are covered with mesh to prevent access by pigeons. The remaining two windows on this elevation are boarded up. The frames of the windows are all constructed from timber and show signs of decay. There are two windows which are currently bricked up and a boarded doorway located at ground level.
- 3.2.4. Generally the brickwork of Area A is sound, although a significant bow in the west facing wall will require it to be rebuilt on a like-for-like basis. Some small sections of brickwork are missing or broken along the top of the walls on the west and south facing aspects. The soffits, bargeboards and fascia, located along the western, southern and eastern facing aspects of Area A are all wooden in construction and show signs of severe decay and are absent in several locations.
- 3.2.5. The roof of Area A comprises a single pitch and is tiled, with a small (boarded) sky-light present on the east facing aspect. Owing to the bow in the west facing wall there are several dips in the roof structure where damage to the main frame has occurred. As a result, a new roof is proposed. Several missing, slipped and raised tiles were recorded

on both aspects of the roof and gaps along the main ridge, caused by missing mortar were also noted.

- 3.2.6. Area B is comprised of a brick built building with a single pitched and tiled roof. There is a large opening (currently sealed with mesh) on the ground floor of the south facing aspect, with a smaller meshed window on the first floor. Access to this area is made via a doorway on its western end. There is also a small (meshed) window on the western end of Area B. The northern and eastern aspects of Area B abut to adjoining (off-site) buildings.
- 3.2.7. The roof of Area B is largely inaccessible owing to the height and proximity of adjoining buildings. There is similar decay of the wooden fascia and soffits on the southern face of the roof; however, from the limited visibility of the roof the tile coverings appear to be in a fair state of repair.
- 3.2.8. Internally, both Area A and B are connected via a series of doorways and a single staircase linking the two. The building has been vacant for some time and no furniture or fittings were present. Parts of the wooden floorboards have perished, making access to certain areas unsafe. Pigeons regularly enter the building and large amounts of their droppings are present throughout.
- 3.2.9. The ground floor of Area A has a temporary plywood flooring. The first floor has recently had its floor covering removed and the lath and plaster ceiling has also recently been removed. The first floor is therefore open to the tiled roof. No roof lining (i.e. felt) is present.
- 3.2.10. The first floor of Area B is open to the roof, with no ceiling in place. Recent repair works included the installation of new roofing felt to the underside of the tiled roof.
- 3.2.11. It is understood that the proposed works will only affect Area A, to include the demolition and rebuild of the western facing wall and main roof. Area B will be retained in its current state. **Therefore, the surveys focussed on the Potential Roosting Features due to be impacted by the development proposals.**
- 3.2.12. Refer to Figure 2 for further details and Appendix 1 for photographs.

Access / Egress

- 3.2.13. Potential access / egress points identified within Area A of the building included:
- Slipped, raised and/or missed tiles on the main roof;
 - Missing mortar along the main ridge of roof;

- Sever damage and wear and tear to sections of the fascia, soffit and bargeboards on the wester, southern and eastern aspects;
- Missing brickwork and/or mortar along the tops of the walls on the western and southern facing aspects;
- Open windows; and
- Severe wear and tear and decay to wooden window frames on the western and eastern facing aspects.

Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) within Area A

3.2.14. Potential roosting features identified on the main house included:

- Within soffits and/or areas of missing brickwork;
- Within the buildings itself, behind felt or within brickwork of internal walls; and
- Beneath roof and ridge tiles, where mortar has deteriorated or where tiles have lifted, slipped or been lost.

Habitat Suitability and Connectivity

3.2.15. The Site is surrounded by the town of Leek, with residential and commercial buildings, as well as transport infrastructure dominating the landscape. The wider landscape surrounding Leek is predominately agriculture, with areas of amenity green space, and natural space also present.

3.2.16. Owing to the anthropogenic nature of the landscape in which the building is located, there is limited commuting opportunities for bats to navigate to the wider landscape. Foraging opportunities are also limited to residential gardens and isolated areas of green space within Leek itself. Potential roosting opportunities exist amongst the older buildings present throughout Leek, and within individual trees scattered across the town.

Evidence of Species Occupation

3.2.17. No evidence of bats was recorded around the exterior or within the interior of Area A or Area B of the building during the survey.

Roost Suitability

3.2.18. Based on the number of potential access / egress points and potential roost features identified during the assessment, Area A of the building is of 'high' suitability to support roosting bat. Three dusk emergence surveys, aided by NVAs, were recommended to confirm presence/likely absence of bats, and if present, confirm the species, roost type and numbers of bats.

3.3. Nocturnal Surveys

Emergence Survey 4th May 2024

- 3.3.1. The first bat recorded during this survey was a common pipistrelle at 21:16 hrs, observed by the most northerly surveyor commuting from the west of the building and flying over the front of the building.
- 3.3.2. Several passes and commuting flights by common pipistrelle were recorded between 21:20 hrs and 21:47 hrs. A number of these bats were recorded approaching from a westerly direction. Much of the activity was of individual bats foraging with the courtyard to the west of the building, foraging above the building or commuting past the building.
- 3.3.3. Three passes by individual noctule were recorded during the survey, with the earliest recorded at 21:24 hrs.
- 3.3.4. No other bat activity was recorded after 21:47 hrs.
- 3.3.5. No emerging bats or roost locations were identified at the building.

Emergence Survey 4th June 2024

- 3.3.6. No bat activity was recorded by any of the surveyors or NVAs during this survey.
- 3.3.7. No emerging bats or roost locations were identified at the building.

Emergence Survey 26th June 2024

- 3.3.8. The first bat recorded during this survey was an individual common pipistrelle, record at 22:01 hrs commuting from west of the building and foraging around the main courtyard until 22:05 hrs.
- 3.3.9. Between 22:08 - 22:10 hrs and again between 22:12 – 22:19 hrs an individual common pipistrelle was recorded foraging in the main courtyard.
- 3.3.10. The remainder of the survey observed limited bat activity with occasional passes by common pipistrelle only.
- 3.3.11. No emerging bats or roost locations were identified at the building.

4. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Survey Results

- 4.1.1. There was no evidence of bats utilising Area A of the building during the PBRA, although this does not infer absence of bats altogether. The building provides several potential roosting features externally and internally.
- 4.1.2. Access to PRFs are via damaged soffits and boarding, external stonework, and wear and tear to the roof could support crevice-dwelling bat species throughout the year, whilst other roosting features (such as lifted tiles) have the potential to support small numbers of crevice-dwelling species. Potential access points into the building (i.e. meshed windows and damage to brickwork) and any cavities between external walls and internal stud walling could provide potential roosting opportunities for several larger, void-dwelling bat species. Consequently, the building was assessed to have 'high' roost suitability and three emergence surveys were recommended.
- 4.1.3. The emergence surveys were completed between May 2024 and June 2024, in line with survey recommendations for buildings of high suitability, based on the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023).
- 4.1.4. No bats were recorded emerging from or re-entering Area A of the building during any of the surveys. Bat activity was considered relatively low throughout each survey and was associated with individual foraging and commuting common pipistrelle. Activity recorded suggests a low number of common pipistrelle are likely roosting in proximity to the building, utilising the courtyard and edge of the building for foraging following emergence, before commuting to the wider landscape.
- 4.1.5. Following completion of the above surveys and at the time of writing this report, Area A of the building is not considered to support any roosting bats. Therefore, no further survey effort or mitigation is required at this stage.

4.2. Area B

- 4.2.1. The main potential bat roosting areas of Area B are to be retained (i.e. the roof structure, tile covering, felt lining and brickwork). Proposed works to Area B include internal works only and the replacement and refurbishment of the windows. Therefore, it was decided that surveys of this section of the building were not required. No signs of bat activity were recorded within Area B and based on the low level of bat activity across the three surveys, bats are unlikely to be present within the building.
- 4.2.2. The NVA and detector present inside the building was located within the first floor of Area B and no bats were recorded internally.

4.2.3. It is therefore considered unlikely that the proposed works will impact any potential roost locations within Area B. However, guidance has been provided in Section 4.4 below to limit any light spill onto Area B following completion of the development works to Area B.

4.3. Survey Validity

4.3.1. The information gathered during the surveys is considered to remain valid for 18 months in line with advice from CIEEM (CIEEM, 2019). Should works not have commenced within this timescale, then an updated PBRA and emergence surveys would be required.

4.3.2. The scope of the surveys and conclusions drawn in this report are based on the site proposals outlined in Section 1.3. An ecologist should be consulted if the proposals are amended at any stage to confirm the potential impact upon protected species.

4.4. Enhancement Measures

4.4.1. In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Environment Act 2021 and BSI 42020:2013, ecological enhancements should be proposed which will result in a gain in biodiversity. The following measures are considered appropriate for the scale of the development:

- The erection of bat boxes or inclusion of bat bricks within any new development/rebuild or on suitable retained trees within land ownership. Bat boxes should be designed for crevice dwelling species (based on the species recorded during the surveys) and should be located at various aspects of the building. This would likely include the south, north and west facing aspects (the east facing aspect is surrounded by tall buildings obscuring access) The boxes should be integrated into the buildings and at a minimum height of 4 metres.
- Lighting should be designed to avoid light spill on any new roosting provisions (i.e. bat boxes) and any sections of Area B which are in proximity to Area A. Artificial lighting will be designed with reference to the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance (2018) and meet the current environmental standards of good practice.

5. REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Photographs





Photograph 1: West facing aspect of Area A (bow in wall)



Photograph 2: North facing aspect of Area A and west facing aspect of Area B



Photograph 3: West facing aspect of Area A (bow in wall)



Photograph 4: South facing aspect of Area A



Photograph 5: Ground floor of Area A



Photograph 6: West facing aspect of Area B



Photograph 7: First floor of Area A



Photograph 8: Removed ceiling showing tile covering (Area A)



Photograph 9: Recently replaced roof of Area B



Photograph 10: Opening in Area B to small courtyard.