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**SURVEY RELATING TO HAREGATE HALL,  
LEEK.**

**DATE OF SURVEYS:** 28th May and 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**PURPOSE OF SURVEY:**

The owner of this property, which is a listed building, is intending to seek permission for alterations and refurbishment involving significant works affecting part of the roof space to the older part of the Hall. The Hall has been unoccupied for some time (other than by illegal occupation) and forms three main sections, the older stone part, the east wing mainly brick building and stone and brick additions to the rear of the original stone section, all of which were entirely in use for residential purposes.. This survey and appraisal is to satisfy the requirements of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to ensure that bats, a European protected species, and their roosts are not adversely affected, and was carried out in respect of all of the Hall, although the loft of the east wing was not inspected internally as this was not the subject of any proposed changes at the present time. An initial survey of the old stone section and the rear sections was undertaken, an emergence surveys was undertaken on one evening to confirm numbers and location of any bat roosts.

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Hall is two storeys although the east wing is of three storey proportions, of a mixed natural stone and brick construction, with small clay tile roof. It is situated on the edge of countryside on the north side of Leek, with the Haregate housing estate forming the eastern boundary. Two substantial barns, formerly part of the working farm adjoin the curtilage of the garden, which are to be the subject of a separate study. From a structural point of view the Hall was considered to be in fairly sound condition, although at the time of inspection remedial work was in progress with the removal of small sections of wall, but the roof was similarly fairly sound with no missing tiles, in particular ridge tiles. Photographs of the Hall are included as an Appendix to this report.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The old stone section and the rear additions of the Hall were inspected internally and externally for evidence of bats and suitable potential roost sites, using an endoscope where necessary. It was also possible to view most of the roof section from above from the cherry picker gantry which was available on site, when it was possible to confirm the reasonable condition of the roof on these sections of the Hall.

Externally, as is evident from the photographs, the walls were in good condition and only on the front elevation, and one point on the rear elevation were gaps evident where some limited rebuilding was taking place and where there could be possible means of entry to the roof space for bats. The view of the roof available from the gantry indicated no opportunities for bats to gain access.

Internally, the focus of attention was the loft sections accessed by hatches off the respective first floor bedrooms. In the old stone section there were spaces above three bedrooms. As detailed on the architect's plans, above bedroom 1.3 the space was dry, cobweb infested & insulated and with no discernible evidence of use by bats, ( no apparent means of access seen from the exterior). Similarly, the spaces above bedrooms 1.1 & 1.2 (accessed from the same hatch) were both dry and with a fair degree of cobwebs, appeared very suitable as a bat roost but again no clear means of access from the exterior of the building. There was no discernible evidence of droppings or other signs of use by bats in these sections of the roof space. The loft spaces to the rear extensions above the bathroom and bedroom 2-1 were similarly checked for signs of bats (there was no void above the kitchen area which was one double height space as shown on the architect's plans). On this part of the Hall complex it was evident that there was a new internal membrane and roof timbers indicative of fairly recent work to this part of the Hall. No light within either roof space was discernible with little, if any, opportunities for bats to access these roof sections and no evidence of droppings or other signs of use by bats was found. Finally the cellar in this part of the Hall was inspected as these can be used by bats but this was flooded and not considered to have any potential as it lacked any means of access from the exterior suitable for bats.

In accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidelines, despite the lack of evidence and generally poor potential of that part of the Hall complex subject to alterations and remedial work, an emergence survey was undertaken. This was carried out on a humid but cool night, temperature 12 degrees with rain threatening. Three observers with heterodyne detectors were in place from 20.45 hrs. covering all the main aspects around the Hall. First records were of a noctule at 20.21hrs around the trees to the north-east of the site, followed by a common pipistrelle (detector setting 45kHz) at 21.24hrs in and around the Hall. Following this sighting, the observer at the side/rear of the Hall shown observed and recorded 10 pipistrelles emerging from near the apex of the main roof ( as shown on the plan attached as an Appendix) from 21.42 hrs to 21.58hrs, with three returning between 22.00 hrs & 22.05hrs, and two emerging at 22.05hrs. From 22.09 hrs to 22.15 hrs bats were seen to emerge and return on a continuous basis. At 22.20 hrs the survey was discontinued as heavy rain set in and it also became too dark to observe the property accurately. No records of bats emerging from elsewhere at the Hall were noted, only bats over flying the garden of the property as recorded from the observers at the

front and rear of the Hall. This would seem consistent with the previous survey of the Hall.

### **APPRAISAL:**

The proposed work to the older part of the Hall, whilst having some effect on the roof space, would not have any impact on any bat roosts. Loft spaces can often be used as summer roosts with normally clear evidence of occupation in the form of droppings and other signs such as feeding remains, but in this case the only evidence of use by bats was in that part of the Hall not at present subject to any work, and in the location where seen to be emerging, this was a physically separate part of the building without any connections which would result in disturbance to the roost.

From my survey I can also confirm that no other protected species would be affected by the proposals for the Hall in particular in respect of protected bird species, although some of the commoner garden species were evident in the curtilage to the property.

### **CONCLUSION**

At the time of inspection remedial work had already commenced at the Hall. This could potentially have affected bat roosts in the building, but the survey carried out did not reveal any historic evidence of use in the loft areas which are subject to work or which are likely to be affected in the near future. The part of the Hall which has clear evidence of a bat roost is sufficiently physically separate in my opinion, not to be affected by the work being undertaken, and indeed the emergence survey confirmed this to be the case. Nevertheless it is an important roost with every indication with the numbers of bats, to be a common pipistrelle maternity roost which should be afforded a high degree of protection for the future; but as matters are at present, provided there is no proposal for that part of the Hall, a Licence should not be required.