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Bat/Scoping Survey:

Wesleyan School,
Wesley Road,
Old Glossop

Commissioned by:

Miss A Barnes,
19 Tavern Road,
Hadfield,
Glossop,
SK13 2 RB

Report date – 10/6/11

Survey date – 8/6/11

Contents.

1 Introduction.

1.1 Remit and Objectives.

1.1.1 I was commissioned to survey this property to satisfy a planning requirement prior to it being converted into a dwelling house. I understood my remit as being to carry-out a scoping study with particular emphasis on bats.

1.1.2 My objectives were to assess:

- the importance of the building to bats.
- whether or not this development will cause significant disturbance to bats, necessitating that a European Protected Species Licence be obtained under the European Habitats Directive, in order for it to progress within the law.
- whether this development will cause low-level disturbance of bats, not requiring a licence, but still requiring appropriate methodology in order to avoid an offence being committed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, as amended.
- whether additional survey work needs to be carried-out; at dusk or dawn for example.
- whether there are any other issues relating to protected species or habitats.

1.2 Initial Assessment of site/Desk-top study.

1.2.1 This is a traditional stone and slate building dating from 1876:

1.2.2 It is accessed from the road via a footbridge over a stream and has two small garden areas either side of the main body of the building:

1.2.3 It is surrounded by residential properties of similar construction-type.
1.2.4 Old Glossop is a village in a relatively rural location. There are woodland and water bodies within 0.5 kilometres.
1.2.5 No formal records search has been commissioned at this juncture. See 1.3.

1.3 Known/Anticipated Status of Bats.

1.3.1 The pipistrelle bat (2 species) is common and widespread in the area. It would be expected to record the Daubenton's, brown long-eared and noctule within a kilometre or two, with additional species such as the whiskered, Brandt's and Natterer's also possible.

Important Notes.

1.3.2 Please note that bats are protected from disturbance as well as direct interference and roosts are protected whether or not bats are present at the time. See Section 3. The law relating to bats applies irrespective of any issue the planners may or may not have drawn attention to, therefore to be protected from any risk of potential prosecution the developer should pay close attention to the conclusions and recommendations made in this and any subsequent reports.

2 My credentials.

Bats.

2.1 I have a bat conservation, science, education and training licence from Natural England, number 20104663, including an Annex to cover barn owls (20103332).
2.2 I have been involved in bat conservation for 24 years, initially as a volunteer with the Nature Conservancy Council and founder member of the South Lancashire Bat Group. Later, and for many years, I was Co-ordinator/Chair and Trainer for the South Lancashire Bat Group. My initial Conservation and Education Licence was extended in 1991 to cover winter hibernation sites/scientific work. From 2003 to 2008 I represented the bat groups of the north-west region at national meetings of the Bat Conservation Trust.
2.3 Over the last 16 years I have done increasing numbers of bat surveys on a consultancy basis, firstly part-time, then-full time from December 2003.
2.4 I am experienced at applying-for European Protected Species Licences with respect to bats.
2.5 Other experience includes:

- Attending bat-worker conferences every year since 1988.
- Helping with winter surveys of underground hibernation sites.
- Participating in “Bat Detector Workshops” during the 1990s in different areas of the country, concerned with locating bat roosts and feeding sites/commuting routes.
- Sitting on local council “Wildlife Advisory Groups” (WAGs) in the Greater Manchester area from the early 1990s until around 2005.
- Helping local authorities and the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit formulate their Biodiversity Action Plans for bats. (See Section 3)
- Administering the bat casework for Natural England in the South Lancashire and Greater Manchester areas over 1998-2000.
- Assisting with research involving mist netting and radio-tracking.
- Continuing to attend courses run by recognised experts to ensure I stay up-to date both with respect to bat conservation and issues such as health and safety.

Birds, including Barn Owls.

2.6 I have been an enthusiastic bird-watcher since 1982, have been a member of two RSPB local groups and have a good working knowledge of British birds. I have done short periods of voluntary work for the RSPB (1989) and (in 1987) for the Lancashire Trust for Nature Conservation (as it was then: now the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside).

2.7 I began training for a bird ringing licence with the British Trust for Ornithology at the end of the 1980s, but did not complete it due to other commitments.

2.8 I have had appropriate training from the Barn Owl Trust to undertake barn owl surveys, and am licenced by Natural England to disturb barn owls. (Licence 20103332)

Other experience.

2.9 I continue to attend courses on a wide range of ecological topics such as habitat surveying, plant and grass identification and mammal surveying. My sandwich placement at University was spent helping with field-based, badger research.

3 Bats and the Law.

3.1 All British bats and their roosts are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 (as amended) and the EC Habitats Directive of 1992 as implemented by the 2010 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. (Further information is available via http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)

3.2 As a result of these two pieces of legislation, amongst other things it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture bats, disturb bats or damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts. Doing so can result in a custodial sentence. Fines of up to £5000 per bat can be issued in cases of non-compliance with the law. Bat roosts are protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

3.3 Under the European legislation, it is necessary for a development to maintain the favourable conservation status of bats in their natural range. This has generally been interpreted as meaning no net loss of roosts, and it is expected that roosting provision for bats will be made better than or equal to whatever is being lost to development. Wider environmental issues such as changes to feeding and commuting habitat, and lighting, also require consideration. However, the term “roost” in this context, tends to be interpreted to exclude places used opportunistically on a single occasion by just one bat.

3.4 Under English legislation (the Wildlife and Countryside Act, as above), a “bat roost” is described as “any structure or place which any wild [bat]… uses for shelter or protection”.

Implications.

3.5 Where a development will potentially impact on the favourable conservation status of bats in their natural range, a European Protected Species Licence is required before the roost can be interfered with in any way. It takes approximately 7 weeks for these to be issued once the application has been submitted. The application includes a Method Statement, and this along with the licence itself forms a legally binding document.

3.6 European Protected Species licences are issued providing planning permission has been granted, where appropriate.

3.7 Three conditions have to be met in order to obtain a licence and planning authorities are now required to apply the same 3 tests before granting planning consent:

- That the development is necessary for the purpose of “preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequence of primary importance for the environment”;
- That there is “no satisfactory alternative”;
- That the action authorised “will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

3.8 Accordingly, planners must now satisfy themselves before issuing planning consent that they have enough information to conclude that either the project will not have a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of bats, or if it seems likely it will, then appropriate mitigation and compensation measures will be employed to ensure this does not occur.

3.9 The mitigation and compensation measures would include appropriate timing and methodology for the work, including details of how the bats will be provided-for in the long term.

3.10 Natural England, the Government body responsible for administering the law relating to bats, has issued guidelines to planners on how to proceed with respect to bats (http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningtransportlocalgov/spatialplanning/standingadvice/advice.aspx).

3.11 Outside the planning system, the onus is on developers/members of the public, to have sufficient investigations undertaken to satisfy themselves (and the authorities in the event of a subsequent investigation), that their actions are unlikely to be in contravention of bat legislation. Where this is in doubt it is necessary to seek appropriate advice and licencing before commencing any work on site.
N.b. It should always be remembered that bats often roost in places not anticipated by a lay person, such as modern buildings, trees with cavities and bridges. Some leave no signs in lofts, as they roost underneath external features such as roof slates, ridges, weather-boarding and cladding.

3.12 In the case of a building, tree or other feature not already known to be a bat roost, if bats are found during the course of work, contractors are legally obliged to stop work and seek advice. This should be from an appropriately experienced and licenced bat ecologist. Assuming good-quality bat survey work had been carried-out before the commencement of the project, and its recommendations followed, it would be unlikely that the discovery of bats during the course of the work would be considered to be “reckless” interference.

Additional Relevant Legislation and Policy.

3.13 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) of 2006 requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the ‘biodiversity duty’, which relates to section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW).

3.14 The aim of the biodiversity duty is to raise the profile of biodiversity in England and Wales, so that the conservation of biodiversity becomes properly embedded in all relevant policies and decisions made by public authorities.

3.15 Accordingly, certain more vulnerable habitats and species are the subject of National and/or Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Some bat species are covered by such plans. (http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx provides more information)

3.16 Since 2005, National Planning Policy sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system, via PPS9 (Planning Policy Statement 9). This gives planning authorities guidance with respect to biodiversity, including protected species. Its contents are required to be taken into account in the planning process.

Birds.

3.17 The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 gives protection to the nests of all wild birds whilst being built or in use. The bird nesting season is generally considered to be 1st March to 31st July.

4 Basic Facts.

4.1 Some basic facts about British bats are :-

- Bats are mammals, feeding their new-born on milk, and generally have one baby each per year.
- Females gather together in summer in warm, clean, draught-free maternity roosts to give birth.
- Babies are generally born in June and are dependent on their mothers for about 6 weeks. When the youngsters are able to hunt independently, the summer maternity colonies disperse.
- Adult British bats feed solely on insects and their droppings are harmless.
- Bats look relatively big in flight but need only tiny access gaps and tend to roost in tight crevices and cavities.
- Each bat colony uses a range of different roost sites at different times. The bats need colder conditions in winter in order to hibernate. When hibernating they are unable to rouse quickly to escape danger.
- Bats can roost in any of the following places: behind weather boarding, hanging tiles and cladding, in roof voids, under roof slates, above/within wooden beams, round window-frames, within ivy, in cellars and in cavities in walls, live and dead trees and culverts/bridges, especially where the latter are associated with water.
- In the warmer months bat roosts can be located by the "swarming" activity of colony members around the roost at dawn.
- Often male bats roost singly, but in autumn are visited by small numbers of females for mating purposes. The females then store the sperm inside their bodies until spring when they become pregnant.
- Alternatively, in autumn the males of some species gather at cave entrances and their equivalent and undertake swarming activity.
- Sometimes bats use "night-roosts" for part of the night while out feeding. They return to a "day roost" at the end of the night, leaving behind droppings and/or discarded moth wings.
- Bats use a range of feeding sites over the course of a night and concentrate on different sites on different nights according to weather conditions and insect availability.
- Approximately twelve species of bat could be encountered during a bat survey in the north-west of England, though some are very rare. By far the most common are the common and soprano pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* – with the latter preferring locations near water). Each species has different roosting, foraging habitat and prey preferences.
- In light of the discovery of European Bat Lyssavirus in Daubenton's bats in Britain, the current recommendation is that bats should not be handled by the public.

4.2 Some basic facts about barn owls are:

- In buildings, these birds need good-sized, secure ledges where the young can be safely reared without fear of them falling.
- The birds occur in areas containing rough grassland, where voles are available for them to feed on.

5 Survey Method.

5.1 I visited the site during the day on 8th June 2011.

5.2 As far as possible with the aid of ladders, million candle-power torch and binoculars, I inspected the building inside and out for the presence of live bats and signs that bats were, or had been, present.

5.3 I also assessed the potential for use by roosting bats in terms of factors such as temperature, draughtiness, humidity, cleanliness and presence of suitable crevices.

5.4 The survey was conducted with the needs of different species of bat over the seasons in mind.

5.5 I assessed the general habitat characteristics of the surrounding area and whether or not they might support species other than the most common.

5.6 I made an assessment of whether additional survey work was required at dusk/dawn or at a more appropriate time of year.

5.7 I assessed the likely impact of the proposed development on the favourable conservation status of bats.

5.8 Incidentally, I always note signs of other species that need to be taken into consideration.

6 Limitations of the Survey.

6.1 There are no loft hatches into the roof-void and the ceiling is in deteriorating condition. An impression of the loft through a hole in the ceiling was all that could be gained at this preliminary survey.

6.2 As bats change roosts frequently, sometimes roost singly and sometimes in large groups, roost in different places at different times of year and don't always leave signs to be discovered at a day-time survey, especially in winter, inevitably conclusions and recommendations have to be based, at least in part, on the experience of the surveyor.

6.3 This was a preliminary survey to discover whether there are obvious signs of use by bats, and to assess for potential roosting places that couldn't be confirmed as roosts at the time of the survey. If signs of bats or potential roosting places exist, follow-up work is usually required at dusk or dawn or at the appropriate time/s of year.

6.4 Any droppings deposited on the outside of a building are often washed or blown away quickly, so evidence of use often doesn't last long once the bats have moved, but an assessment has been made of potential bat roosting places associated with the exterior of the building.

6.5 The absence of obvious bat droppings within buildings does not always confirm the absence of bats as bat droppings can to turn to powder quite quickly.

6.6 As bats often roost in crevices in winter, and are particularly hard to locate when hibernating, the report highlights any areas that could be used by bats in winter.

7 Findings.

7.1 There was a single hole in the ceiling of the upper storey of the main body of the building. Through this it could be seen that there is a substantial roof-void and the roof is unlined. There are no other roof-voids in the building.

7.2 From within the upper storey of the main building, nestlings could be heard calling. By opening the internal flap to the recess behind a damaged, external air vent, a nest of the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) could be seen. Only one such vent seemed to be in use and most are not damaged.

7.3 The undamaged openings in the vents are probably large enough to allow access by pipistrelle bats but other species are probably too large to gain entry. At least one other vent is damaged however:

7.4 Once through the vent there is access into the gap between the courses of stones making-up the wall. The gap in the case of the vent shown above contained cobwebs.

7.5 Externally, the roof is in deteriorating condition providing bat access places between slates and under ridges. There are some gaps where coping stones slot together and there are gaps at the top of some of the walls that would allow bats into the walls to roost.

7.6 There are trees around the garden and along the stream which, along with the stream itself, will attract bats to feed. The garden areas are sheltered providing a good location for bats to feed.

7.7 The northern boundary wall contains gaps where bats could hibernate in winter and part of it is overgrown with ivy, providing a habitat suitable for both bats and nesting birds:

8 Conclusions.

8.1 The loft couldn't be checked for signs of roosting bats and even if an appropriate opening were to be made in the ceiling, health and safety considerations may limit the extent to which the loft could be inspected.

8.2 Overall the building has medium to high potential for some use by roosting bats. Accordingly, there is sufficient bat roosting potential that further survey work should be undertaken in accordance with good practice guidelines. (See 1 in Section 10).

8.3 While it would be worthwhile attempting to gain access to the loft, as some roosting behaviour would not necessarily leave signs in the loft anyway, there needs to be at least one bat activity survey. It is quite difficult to view some roof-lines fully so the survey would be best undertaken at dawn when bats "swarm" before entering to roost.

8.4 The finding of a confirmed roost would require a European Protected Species Licence to be obtained prior to the development commencing – see 3.4 to 3.6 above.

8.5 Sparrows are nesting in the south-facing wall of the main body of the building.

8.6 The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 gives protection to the nests of all wild birds whilst being built or in use. No work must be done that would impact on the nest until the young are completely independent of it. The bird nesting season is generally considered to be 1st March to 31st July.

8.7 A consortium of organisations, via their report on "The population status of birds in the UK: Birds of Conservation Concern 3 (2009)" (see 2 in Section 10) have given the house sparrow and starling "red" status on a scale of "red" to "green", where red is of the highest conservation concern. For this reason, it should be ensured these birds can nest here again in future. If the current nesting place cannot be retained, commercially available "sparrow terracing" should be provided nearby on the same wall. See Appendix 1.

8.8 Both bats and birds could make use of the northern boundary wall but this will presumably be unaffected by the work.

9 Recommendations.

These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the Conclusions above.

9.1 If possible create an opening into the loft, accessible by ladder.
9.2 Have a dawn, bat re-entry survey undertaken during June or early July.
9.3 If the findings are ambiguous, for example there is a lot of bat activity but no bats seem to enter to roost, or a single bat returns to roost, have a repeat survey undertaken in August when a territorial male bat could be discovered or the tail end of a maternity colony.
9.4 Do no work to the building that might affect the sparrows' nest until the birds are completely independent of the nest.
9.5 Ensure at least one nesting site is still available to the birds when the work is undertaken.

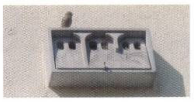
10 Further Reading.

1. Bat Conservation Trust. Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines. 2007. BCT.
2. RSPB et al. "The population status of birds in the UK: Birds of Conservation Concern (2009)".

Appendix 1 - house sparrow nesting provision

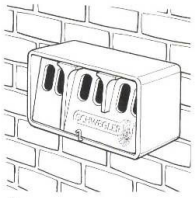
Birds

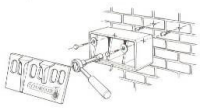
installation examples ▶



Sparrow Terrace 1SP

Installation ▼





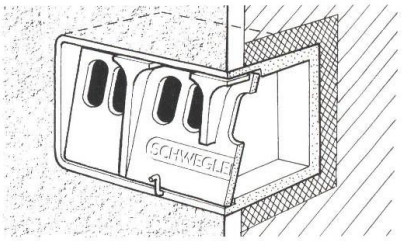
▲

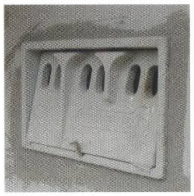
Installation Method 1
Simple surface installation using the plugs and screws supplied

▲ Built into insulation of walls

Installation Method 2
Complete installation as a nesting block within brick or concrete walls
▼

To avoid heat-conduction please also use wall insulation, or install at a suitable depth in the wall





House Sparrow (Passer domesticus):
These birds thrive in areas cultivated by man, from villages to large cities.

Tree Sparrow (Passer montanus):
Also widely distributed throughout towns and villages as well as the surrounding fields, farms, woodlands and hedges, and woodlands bordering rivers and streams.

General details:
While nesting and raising their young both types of sparrow feed exclusively on insects, especially arthropods (insects with segmented legs). Therefore, their traditional role in keeping down pests and maintaining the balance of nature is a very important one, though not always recognised. Recently the numbers of both species have declined substantially and in some areas they are now rarely seen. Long term studies have confirmed this drastic reduction in their numbers across Europe. The causes include the clearance and monotonous nature of rural areas, the sterility of many chemicals in agriculture and gardens. The survival of these species is particularly threatened by widespread building renovation and clearance which denies them many nesting possibilities.

Occupants:
House and Tree Sparrows, and in some instances other birds which use nest boxes such as Tits, Redstart and Spotted Flycatcher.

Material:
SCHWEGLER wood-concrete.

Siting:
On all types of houses in built-up areas, and on industrial and agricultural buildings such as barns, sheds and factories.

Installation height:
2 metres or more above ground level.

Cleaning:
Cleaning is advised but is not essential. By turning the safety catch by 180° the front panel can be removed.

Dimensions of brood chambers:
Each: height 16 x width 10.5 x depth approx. 15 cm

External dimensions:
height 24.5 x width 43 x

Suppliers of Schwegler woodcrete nest and bat boxes:

Woodcrete box. 'breathable' woodcrete.
C.J. Wildbird Foods Ltd. The Rea, Upton Magna, Shrewsbury, SY4 4UB Tel: 01743 709555

Schwegler 'woodcrete' boxes, hibernation boxes and standard wooden boxes (various sizes for different species), with siting information
Alana Ecology Ltd. The Old School, Church Street, Bishop's, Castle, Shropshire SY9 5AE
E-mail:info@alanaecology.com Web:http://www.alanaecology.com Tel: 01588 630173

Schwegler 'woodcrete' boxes – full range Jacobi Jayne & Co Hawthorne Cottage, Maypole Hoath, Canterbury, Kent CT3 4LW
E-mail enquiries@jacobijayne.com Web: www.wildbirdnews.com Tel: 01227 860388 Fax: 01227 860521