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peakecology LIMITED
ECOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS



34 Market Street, Chapel-en-le-Frith

Daytime Bat Inspection

Issue record

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Peak Ecology Ltd on behalf of Barbara Fearn. It provides details of a daytime bat survey undertaken of the former chapel located at 34 Market Street in Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire (grid ref: SK 058 807).

Proposals are currently being put in place to convert the former chapel into two adjoined residential properties. The main structures of the building will be retained, including the internal first floor and the brick built extension to the north-east. Prior to the submission of a planning application, a report detailing the presence or absence of any protected species must be completed.

The object of this survey was therefore to establish whether the barn is by bats and/or nesting birds and if necessary, to recommend further work in order to advise mitigation measures.

All bat species are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are protected by Parts 4(b), 4(c) and 5 of Section 9 of that Act. All bat species are also European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

In net effect, it is a legal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill bats;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obscure access to a breeding site or resting place*
- Possess, control, transport, sell or exchange a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally.

*Because bats use roosts at different times of year, and often return to the same roosts annually, it is a legal opinion that a roost is protected whether bats are in occupancy at the time or not.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it a legal offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird;
- Damage, destroy or take the nest of any wild bird;
- Take or destroy the egg/s of any wild bird
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any species listed on Schedule 1 of the act (e.g. Barn Owl) whilst on or building a nest; in or near a nest with eggs;
- Disturb the dependant young of a Schedule 1 bird.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Building Inspection

The building inspection was carried out by Sarah Allen (Natural England Bat Licence No. 20120206) and Carly Lynsdale following accepted standard methodologies set out by the Bat Conservation Trust (2012), on the 25th September 2012.

An external and internal inspection of the building was carried out to identify potential access points suitable for bats and any evidence of bats. High powered torches, ladders, an endoscope and binoculars were available for use where appropriate.

Also noted from the external and internal building inspection was the presence of birds or evidence of nesting.

Photographs were taken of both external and internal features of the building to document findings and are included in the report.

2.2. Building Assessment

The building was described as having low, medium or high potential to support roosting bats. Evaluation of potential is necessarily subjective and relies on professional judgment. Any building given a medium or high potential should be subject to more detailed assessment. The following gives a guide to how this evaluation was implemented:

- Low potential – Buildings that have limited features suitable for roosting and/or limited potential access points. There is no physical evidence of bats using the building and it is unlikely that they are doing so.
- Medium potential – Buildings that have some features and potential access points that look suitable for use by roosting bats. Limited or ambiguous physical evidence *may* have been seen. It is possible that bats may be using the building.
- High potential – Buildings with many or better quality features and potential access points that appear suitable for use by roosting bats. Physical evidence may have been seen. It is highly possible or probable that bats may be using the building.

2.3. Survey Constraints

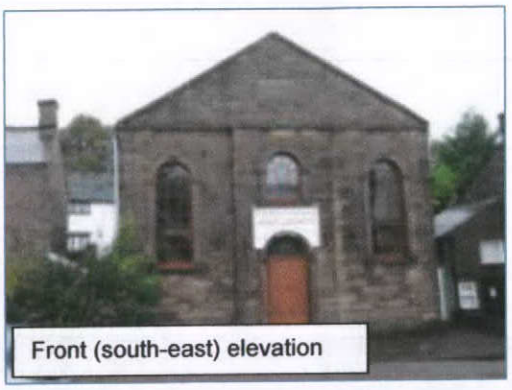
Access to the external elevations of the building was limited by the adjacent properties. Full access could therefore only be taken to the south-east (the main frontage) of the building. Parts of the building's sides could be seen from the road and a good view of the roof was also possible from the road.

3. RESULTS

3.1. External Inspection

No evidence of bats was found during the external inspection of the building.

The building was a stone building with a stone tile double-pitched roof.



Front (south-east) elevation

The exterior of the building was in good condition. Some weathering to the stonework and pointing was visible, particularly on the more exposed south-eastern elevation. However the gaps created here were narrow and mostly surface level, with surveyors unable to fit one finger into the gap created.



Small gaps in stonework

The roof also had areas of missing pointing along the ridge and several slipped or raised tiles across both pitches, providing potential access points suitable for use by bats.



Roof

Large single glazed windows occurred on three sides of the building; these windows were typical of chapel windows. The glass was intact in all of the windows, although one window was noted to be blocked with boards. The windows and doors were tight to the surrounding framework with no potential access points through to the interior.

The plastic guttering was attached to fascias on the north-eastern and south-western elevations. Two gaps were noted beneath the fascias on the north-eastern elevation. The first of these occurred directly above the southern-most window and the second occurred where the brick-built extension joined the main building.


Gap behind fascia


Gap behind fascia

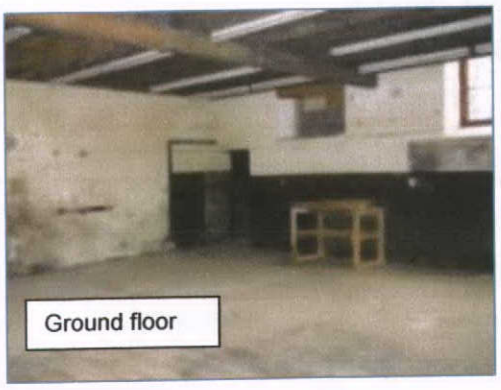
No bats droppings were seen beneath either of these gaps, although they were considered to provide some potential for a single sheltering bat.

The extension comprised solid red brick walls with a single-pitch roof with slate tiles.

3.2. Internal Inspection

No evidence of bats was seen during the internal inspection.

The building was two-storeys, including the extension. A wooden floor, supported by wooden and metal joists separated the two floors, although due to the large windows that spanned both floors, there were gaps around the edges of this floor connecting the two levels. The ground floor and the first floor were open and empty at the time of the survey.


Ground floor


First floor

They were extremely light, due to the large windows and cool, as the building had been unused for some time. The walls and ceiling were plastered, which was in relatively good condition with the exception of a small number of cracks.

A loft space occurred over the main chapel building, although the extension was open to the single-pitched roof, which was covered in cobwebs. A skylight panel also occurred within the roof of the extension, creating a light interior.

The loft space was large and draughty. Two king-post trusses and numerous wooden timbers supported the unlined roof. Evidence of rot and damp could be seen on many of these timbers and the joists were judged unsafe to walk on in places.

There were several small gaps in the roofing tiles, through which water was dripping at the time of the survey. These gaps were considered likely to create the overall damp and draughty nature of the loft. The loft was also particularly dirty and dusty, although no large cobwebs were noted.


Loft space


Holes at ridge

3.3. Surrounding Habitats

The building was situated on the main street through Chapel-en-le-Frith. It was surrounded on all sides by buildings, including residential, commercial and industrial properties. This prevented thorough access to the back and sides of the building. The chapel building did not have any associated garden or green space, with the nearest open and vegetated area occurring around the school to the north-west.

3.4. Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds from recent bird breeding seasons was seen within the building. The potential access points, i.e. the gaps in the roof, were considered, in general, too small to be used by birds.

4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Bats

The interior of the building was considered generally unlikely to be used by roosting bats, due to the damp and draughty nature of the loft space and the open, light nature of the main building. British bat species are known to prefer warm, dark, dry and sheltered roosting locations and the conditions offered by this building would therefore be sub-optimal for bats.

Given the sub-optimal nature of the interior and the lack of any evidence of bats, the presence of bats inside the building is considered extremely unlikely and no specific further survey work or mitigation will be required.

The external surfaces were also, in general, in good condition, with the exception of some narrow, shallow gaps considered too small to be accessed by roosting bats. These gaps were most evident on the front of the building, where it was most open. It is therefore considered unlikely that any deep cracks would be present on the rear of the building (where access was not available), as this would be sheltered by the adjacent building.

There were however two gaps behind the fascia board on the north-eastern elevation of the building. Bat species such as pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* sp. are known to use gaps like this on an occasional basis during the summer months. An established roost is considered extremely unlikely in a location such as this, due to the small size of the space available behind the fascia board and the varying conditions likely given the north-east facing of this elevation. Given the location of these gaps, close to the eaves of the two-storey property, it was not possible to conduct a detailed examination. However, no droppings were seen beneath these features and it is possible that the gaps are very shallow and exposed, rendering them unlikely to be used by bats. As a precaution, it is recommended that these gaps remain unaffected during the proposals, providing continual potential for use by bats. However, if this is not possible, it is recommended that prior to any works to the fascias or their immediate surroundings, a detailed examination of these gaps is undertaken by a licensed bat ecologist to ensure that a bat is not present or to rule out their use by bats. This would best be undertaken once any scaffolding is in place. As an established bat roost is considered extremely unlikely, it is not considered that the potential presence of bats behind this fascia would provide an obstacle to the proposed conversion work. Additionally, as an established roost is considered unlikely, further survey work is not considered necessary, as a survey on a given night would not necessarily pick up individual bats using the feature on a transient basis.

4.2. Nesting Birds

The presence of nesting birds is considered unlikely given the lack of evidence of previous nesting and the lack of potential access points large enough to be used by nesting birds. No specific mitigation is therefore recommended.

4.3. General Mitigation Recommendations

If bats are found during any work, work should stop immediately and a licensed bat ecologist should be consulted.

If breeding birds are encountered during any work, work should stop in that area and only continued when breeding has ceased and young have left the nest.

5. ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Potential Impacts

5.1.1 Bat Roosts

As no evidence of bats was found and the building, in general, was considered sub-optimal for use by bats, the presence of bats is considered unlikely.

There is a possibility that bats may use gaps beneath the fascia board occasionally and these should remain unaffected or be closely examined by a licensed bat ecologist.

5.1.2 Bat Foraging and Commuting Habitat

There is no predicted impact on foraging or commuting habitat.

5.1.3 Birds

It is considered unlikely that the proposed works will have a negative impact on nesting birds.

5.2. Conclusions

As impacts to bats are considered unlikely, no further survey work or specific mitigation is recommended, with the exception of a more detailed examination of two external features, if they are to be affected.

6. REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust (2012) *Bat surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition.* Bat Conservation Trust.

Mitchell-Jones A. J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

Mitchell-Jones A. J. and McLeish A. P. (2004) *Bat Workers' Manual 3rd Edition* JNCC