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High Peak Borough Council
Buxton Town Hall
Market Place
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33 ST JOHN'S ROAD, BUXTON: UPDATE BAT SURVEY

Dear Sirs

Dunelm Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Ian Gidley to undertake an update bat survey of 33 St John's Road, Buxton in support of a planning application to construct two apartments. This would involve demolition of the existing dwelling house and garage. Previous bat surveys of the site were completed by Penny Anderson Associates Ltd in September 2012 and August 2008. Further details can be found in the respective reports but in summary, both the 2008 and 2012 surveys found that the building was used by low numbers of non-breeding brown long-eared and common pipistrelle bats. The primary objective of the current survey was to update the 2012 survey to ascertain if there has been any change in roost status.

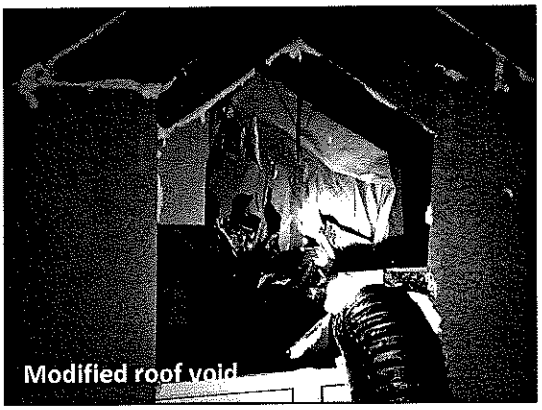
A bat survey of the site was carried out on 1 December 2015 following the methodology outlined in the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*[1] and *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines*[2]. The survey involved systematically searching the exterior and interior of the buildings for bats and their field signs with the aid of ladders, endoscope (Snakevision), close-focusing binoculars (Opticron Countryman BGA 8x42) and a powerful torch (Clulite 1M candle-power). Such signs may include insect remains, droppings, grease marks, urine stains and smoothing or lack of cobwebs. The survey was undertaken by Jon Guarnaccio MCIEEM who has 13 years continuous experience as an ecological consultant and has held a Natural England survey licence since 2005 (2015-15066-CLS-CLS).

There appear to have been no changes to the exterior of the building since the 2012 survey. However, between June and November 2015, the property was unlawfully occupied and the interior of the dwelling transformed into a cannabis farm with all rooms (including the roof void) used for cultivation of the plant. Within the roof void, the under felt has been ripped away in places (presumably for ventilation purposes) with white visqueen sheeting and high powered growing lamps installed throughout. Despite these significant changes, two brown long-eared bat droppings were recorded in the western end of the roof void although these

[1] Mitchell-Jones AJ (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough

[2] Hundt L (2012). *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines. Second Edition*. BCT, London.

were not recent in age suggesting that bats may not have used the roof void since it was modified in June 2015.


Modified roof void

Although bats may not have used the roof void of the dwelling house since summer 2015, it is possible that they could return to the building in spring 2016, especially considering that lighting and some of the visqueen sheeting has now been removed. As such, it is not possible to declare the roost defunct at this point in time, especially considering that bat use of the building was fairly constant between 2008 and 2012 indicating that bats are faithful to the roost. However, if bats do return in spring 2016, it is likely to be low numbers of non-breeding bats using the building as a night roost or summer day roost as originally was the case.

Taking this information into consideration, the impact of demolishing the dwelling is still assessed as low as per the 2012 assessment. There are no impacts associated with the loss of the garage as it offers no bat roost potential. Mitigation measures should follow those prescribed in the previous bat survey reports with the exception of two elements.

The first is that demolition works are undertaken under a Natural England low impact bat class licence as opposed to a standard EPS licence. The new system is specially designed for development work that affects low conservation status roosts, such as day, night or feeding roosts, affecting small numbers of common bat species i.e. such as the current site.

Secondly, the previous bat survey reports recommended a dedicated bat loft was created within the new dwelling as part of the mitigation scheme. However, Natural England will no longer licence such measures where only low status roosts are concerned as it is considered to be 'over mitigation'. English Nature's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* states '*For non-breeding and feeding perch roosts of pipistrelle spp. and brown long-eared bats, there is 'flexibility over the provision of bat boxes/access into new buildings and no timing or monitoring conditions*' (Mitchell-Jones 2004). It is therefore advised that two Schwegler 2F bat boxes are installed on semi-mature ash trees within the property's rear garden. The boxes should be installed at a height of 4 m with care taken to ensure that no branches or limbs obstruct the boxes. No post development monitoring is required.

I trust the above information is useful and enables High Peak Borough Council to determine the planning application.

Yours faithfully

Jon Guarnaccio BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM

Principal Ecologist

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