
DAYTIME BAT SURVEY

HIGHWOOD BARN, NEW MILLS, HIGH PEAK

MAY 2022



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd. was commissioned in 2022 by Mr Paul Race to undertake a daytime bat survey at Highwood Barn, New Mills, High Peak (O.S. grid reference: SK 00179 87108). The proposed development site currently comprises a barn currently used for storage.

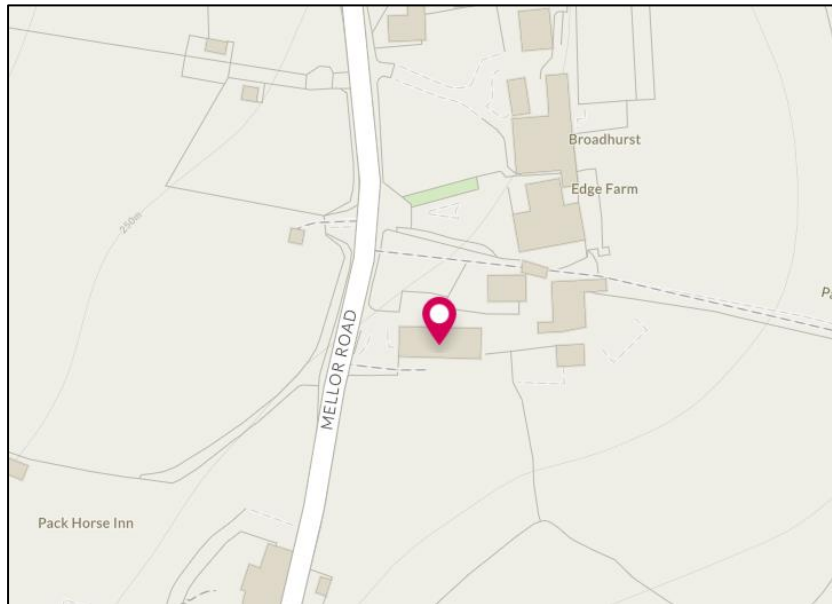


Figure 1 showing the site location

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the conversion of the barn into a residential dwelling.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

Legal Context

- 1.4 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make it an offence to:
- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
 - Deliberately disturb bats;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.
- 1.5 The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
 - Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- 1.6 Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (e.g., Natural England) prior to work commencing.
- 1.7 All bird species are protected at their nest under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Daytime Bat Survey

- 2.1 A daytime bat survey of the site was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost within the building.
- 2.2 An external survey was carried out, which included, for example, looking for gaps between any soffit boards and walls, gaps between window frames and the walls, and looking for bat droppings on the walls and window ledges. An internal survey was also carried out, with particular focus on gaps in walls, cracks in roof beams, and any evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, in the internal spaces.
- 2.3 A pair of close-focussing binoculars and a high-powered torch were used to search for evidence of bats externally.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 Kate Reed (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on 24th May 2022. Kate is experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys. The weather at the time of the survey was sunny and mild.

Survey Constraints

- 2.5 Daytime bat surveys can be conducted at any time of the year. The structure could be surveyed fully internally and externally, therefore there were no constraints to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS

Site Description

- 3.1 The property comprises a detached barn constructed from stone and has a pitched, tiled roof. The barn is used for storage only.

External Assessment

- 3.2 The external stonework is in good condition (see Photographs 1 and 2). Most of the stones are mortared and sit flush to one another. Some small gaps occur between stones on the rear elevation, but these do not provide an onward cavity. The stone window lintels are complete. The window frames sit flush to the surrounding masonry.



Photograph 1 showing the exterior of the barn



Photograph 2 showing the stone lintels

- 3.3 The roof is pitched with slate roof tiles (see Photograph 3). The roof tiles are complete and sit flush to one another. The ridge tiles are complete and mortared. The single-storey extension to the rear has a sheet-metal roof, which is intact.



Photograph 3 showing pitched roof

- 3.4 The property does not have soffits, and the roof edges are mortared and sealed (see Photograph 4).



Photograph 4 showing the barn exterior

Internal Assessment

- 3.5 The interior is open to the roof, with no separate roof voids (see Photographs 5 and 6). The roof is new, and the roof joists are complete and intact, offering no cracks for bats to exploit. The roof is lined with Breathable Roofing Membrane, which has no tears or rips. The interior is well-lit. The internal brick and breezeblock walls are complete and mortared.



Photograph 5 showing the barn interior



Photograph 6 showing the barn interior

- 3.6 No evidence of bat activity, such as bat droppings, could be found inside the main section of the barn. The interior of the single-storey section also has no roof void (see Photograph 7). The roof joists in this section are complete, and the internal walls are cemented. No evidence of bat activity was found in this section.



Photograph 7 showing the interior of the single-storey section

- 3.7 The property is enclosed by bare ground, and no evidence of other protected species could be found on the site.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found at the property at Highwood Barn. The property appears to be well-sealed and offers no suitable bat roosting cavities. Given the results of the survey, the property is considered to offer negligible bat roost suitability.
- 4.2 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the development can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g., bat activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the negligible potential of the building to support bats. However, if the work is delayed by longer than two years from the date of this survey, a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.
- 4.3 It should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, and single or small numbers of bats are able to roost in extremely small spaces, such as in gaps between panels. The development work should be undertaken with care, for example with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged.
- 4.4 If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst an experienced bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance. This can be Rachel Hacking Ecology (0161 465 8971) who undertook the initial survey, any licensed bat worker, or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228).
- 4.5 No evidence of other protected species, such as nesting birds, was found within the buildings.



5.0 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.). (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish, A.P. Ed., (2004) *3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

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