
DAYTIME BAT SURVEY & NESTING BIRD SURVEY

HORWICH LODGE, WHALEY BRIDGE, HIGH PEAK

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd. was commissioned in 2022 by Simon Hinchcliffe via High Peak Architecture Ltd to undertake a daytime bat survey at Horwich Lodge, Whaley Bridge, High Peak, Derbyshire (O.S. grid reference: SK 02040 80850). The proposed development site currently comprises a detached barn with single-storey lean-to. The barn is unoccupied and used for storage only.

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for 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.
- 2.4 In addition to the daytime bat survey, a nesting bird survey was undertaken to assess the likelihood of the building offering suitability for nesting birds.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.5 Joel Hacking (Senior Ecologist) carried out the daytime bat survey on the 28th September 2022. Joel is experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys. Joel holds a Natural England Class 2 Survey Licence for bats (licence reference no.: 2016-24701-CLS-CLS). The weather at the time of the survey was sunny and mild.

Survey Constraints

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

3.0 RESULTS

Site Description

- 3.1 The property at Horwich Lodge is a detached barn, with a single-storey lean-to. The barn is constructed from stone, with a pitched, tiled roof. The barn is used for storage only.

External Assessment

- 3.2 The external stone walls are complete and mortared (see Photographs 1 and 2). The walls are mortared, with ventilation holes present on each elevation. The window frames are rotting but retain a good seal with the surrounding masonry. The front elevation is open.



Photograph 1 showing the front elevation of the dwelling



Photograph 2 showing the exterior of the building from the rear

- 3.3 The roof of the property is tiled with cement roof tiles. The roof tiles are in situ, with only minor gaps between tiles. The ridge tiling is complete (see Photograph 3). A single-storey lean-to is present on the side elevation, and this is firmly sealed to the main building. The lean-to has an elevation with corrugated metal, which is complete, and sealed to the main section of the building. The roofing on the lean-to has slate tiling, which is complete and intact.



Photograph 3 showing the roof of the property



Photograph 4 showing the lean-to

- 3.4 No soffits or bargeboards are present where the roof meets the stone walls (see Photograph 5). The upper stone courses are complete.



Photograph 5 showing the upper stone courses

Internal Assessment

- 3.5 The upper floor is accessible, and is a well-lit space due to the windows and ventilation holes. The roof is not mortared behind the tiles. The wooden roof joists are complete and without gaps or cracks (see Photograph 6). Several holes are present in the roof. The window and ventilation hole lintels were inspected, and where possible searched with an endoscopic camera. No evidence of bat activity was found in the upper floor or in any of the lintel cavities. The upper floor offers poor thermal properties. Many of the

roof tiles, walls and roof beams have dense cobwebbing present, suggesting no recent bat access.

- 3.6 Several disused bird nests are present on the upper floor of the barn.



Photograph 6 showing the roof structure of the upper floor



Photograph 7 showing the window lintel

- 3.7 The ground floor is well-lit internally, and the internal stone walls are cemented and painted. The concrete flooring above is complete, with no significant crevices between the concrete slabs (see Photograph 8). The lintel above the open front door was searched, with no onward cavity and no evidence of bat activity found.



Photograph 8 showing the ground floor

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 No evidence of bat activity was found at the property at Horwich Lodge, Whaley Bridge. The property appears to offer poor thermal properties for bats. 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 Evidence of historic bird nesting was found inside the property, with several nests and present on the wooden beams. If works is to commence during the nesting bird season (generally March-August) then a nesting bird survey should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.

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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