

Bat Survey Report

Rose Hill Lodge, Erbistock, Wrexham

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Produced by



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REPORT VERIFICATION AND DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE

Report Version	Date	Completed by:	Checked by:	Approved by:
Draft V1		Jack Halpin Ecologist, Wildbanks Conservation	Mick Smith Director Wildbanks Conservation	

The information we have prepared is true and we confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The report has been prepared on behalf Mrs Alexandra Newman and provides the results of a preliminary bat roost assessment and one nocturnal bat survey undertaken at Rose Hill Lodge, Overton Bridge, Erbistock, Wrexham. The development site consists of a two-story brick-built extension adjacent to a two-story residential property. A survey for the potential use for breeding birds was also undertaken.
- 1.2 The proposed development site is in the semi-rural setting of Erbistock, Wexham. The development is a two-story extension of a residential property, with the immediate surrounding being gardens, gravel car park, and road. The surrounding area consists of multiple pastoral fields and parkland. The river dee is located within 85m to the east of the property.
- 1.3 Development proposals are for the immediate demolition of an existing extension due to it being unsafe. Subsidence is occurring and the extension is moving away from the main house. The extension will be rebuilt on the same footprint. The adjacent main structure of the property is not being altered, with the only works associated being to tie the new development in.
- 1.4 The aim of the survey was to provide sufficient ecological information for the local planning authority (LPA) to determine the associated planning application. The objectives of the study were to:
 - Provide baseline information on the current habitats and ecological features both on-site and in the immediate surrounding area;
 - Identify the presence or potential presence of any protected species or habitats and provide an appraisal of any potential effects that the proposed development may have on these;
 - Provide recommendations for further pre-construction survey work and / or mitigation measures if required and present opportunities for habitat enhancement.

2.0 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Desk Top Study

2.1 A desktop study was undertaken by Wildbanks Conservation during the ecological assessment. The following other online resources were also used for background information of the Site.

- Ordnance Survey maps
- Aerial photographs

Bat Building Assessment

External and Internal Visual Assessment

2.2.1 The exterior of all aspects of the building were visually assessed for potential access points and evidence of bat activity on 30/04/21. With the aid of binoculars and borescope, features such as small gaps under barge/soffit/fascia boards, raised or missing roof/ridge tiles or gaps at gable ends, which have the potential for use as access points, were sought. Evidence that bats actively used these potential access points would include staining within the gaps, or bat droppings or urine staining under gaps; a note being made wherever these were present. The presence of cobwebs and / or general detritus within and around potential access points was used as an indicator that bats had not recently used the area to access the building. Following the external assessment, an internal assessment of the building was undertaken, searching for the same evidence.

2.2.2 All buildings were classified as being one of either a confirmed roost or having high, moderate, low or negligible roosting potential for bats. Trees if present with low or negligible potential were classed as not requiring further surveys in relation to bats. Buildings with a rating of low or above would be subject to additional nocturnal surveys in line with current national guidelines.

2.2.3 The surveys were undertaken by Mick Smith MCIEEM (NRW bat licence S08944/1) and Jack Halpin (ACIEEM) of Wildbanks Conservation following methodology set out in the Bat Conservation Trust Handbook Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

2.3 *Bat Emergence Survey*

2.3.1 Following the external and internal visual assessment, one emergence survey were undertaken on the building to observe any potential bats roosting in the building not identified during the visual assessment. The surveys were carried out by two experienced bat surveys led by Jack Halpin, 5 years experience in conducting bat surveys and accredited agent on Mick Smith NRW bat license (S08944/1). Surveyors were positioned strategically so that good coverage of all aspects of the building was achieved. The surveys were undertaken within the optimum time for bat activity (May-September) and under optimum conditions.

2.3.2 The surveyors each used an Anabat Walkabout with the additional aid of a FLIR SCION thermal monocular. Any recordings were analysed using Analook Insight.

2.3.3 The surveys were undertaken following methodology set out in the Bat Conservation Trust Handbook Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

2.4 *Buildings-Birds-Visual Assessment*

The building was assessed for nesting birds within the same timeframe as the bat visual assessment of the building on 30/04/21. All birds, their eggs and their nests are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and therefore it is an offence to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built. All cracks, gaps and potential nesting areas were checked for the presence of nests/nesting material/live birds, and 10 minutes was spend listening for any noise of nestlings whilst inside the building. The exterior of the building was watched for approximately 1 hour to locate any birds entering or exiting the building.

Survey Limitations

2.5 May is within the optimal survey season to observe recent signs of bats and nesting birds. Access into internal roof space is not possible due to no access hatch being present. However, all external access points to within the roof space could be covered during the nocturnal survey. Therefore, there were no limitations to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

Wider habitat

The property is in a rural setting 7km South of Wrexham centre and 5.4km East of Ruabon. To the west of the property the habitat consists of large areas of parkland with scattered woodland copse. To the east of the site lies the river dee situated in a valley with wooded banks and flood plain meadows beyond which leads to open countryside.

3.2.1 Buildings – Bat Visual Assessment

External assessment

3.2.2 The structure is a brick built two-story extension attached to a two-story residential property. The walls are brick with mortar being in good condition; however, gaps are present within walls through weep vents (Plate 4) and a large crack associated with subsidence away from adjacent property. The subsidence large vertical crack, most of the crack is filled with expanding foam and is unsuitable for bats; however, at the top of the crack a small void is present providing potential roosting opportunities for bats. Barge boards and soffit boxes are present; gaps between wall plate and soffit providing access on top of wall plate. The roof structure is in good condition: few gaps were present within in the verge; slate roof and ridge tiles were in good condition with little lifting (Plate 3).

3.2.3 Potential roosting features are limited to: access points between soffit and wall plates crawling access into the roof void could be possible at these points; loss of weep vents allowing access into cavity wall; and a small area within the large crack between buildings due to subsidence. No free flight access is possible at any point into the loft space. All of these access points were checked using a borescope and no signs of bat activity were noted

3.2.4 Overall the building is very well sealed providing only limited roosting opportunities

3.2.5 *Internal assessment*

Internally the building could not be fully assessed as no access was available to within the roof. Internally, the rest of the building consists of a kitchen dining area with no suitability to bats.3.2.6 No bat droppings or other signs of bat use was seen throughout the preliminary roost inspection.

3.2.6 Habitat surrounding the Site is excellent for foraging bats. Parkland with hedgerows and copse are present surrounding the property and the river Dee with wooded banks is to the east providing excellent connectivity and foraging habitat for all bat species.

3.2.7 The building was classed as having low potential for bats and as such, one emergence survey was conducted to ascertain presence or likely absence of bats.

3.3 *Building – Birds*

No evidence of birds using the building for breeding purposes or any nesting material was found during any of the surveys. No birds were seen entering or exiting the building during the survey. Possible access points usable by birds do exist

3.4 *Bat Emergence Surveys*

One bat emergence survey was undertaken on the dusk of 17/05/2021. One bat activity survey was undertaken due the building being classified as having low potential for bats, this is in line with best practise guidelines published by Bat Conservation Trust.

3.4.1 The following table provides details of the surveys undertaken.

Date	Survey type	Time started	Time finished	Sunrise/Sunset time	Temperature	Weather conditions
17/05/2021	Dusk	20:52	23:07	21:07	11C	Dry and still and clear skies

3.4.2 *Dusk survey 17th May 2021*

The Survey was undertaken by Jack Halpin and Luke Osman, each surveyor was positioned to be able to view all aspects of the extension and be able to take in to account the main section of the house also. A Flir Scion thermal imaging camera was also used to aid identification of a roost.

- 3.4.3 No bats were seen emerging from the building during the survey, bat activity was very low throughout with only a handful of passes recorded throughout the night. Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) were recorded sporadically within the first 60 minutes of the survey. The first bat encountered was a Common pipistrelle at 21:31. Two brief passes of *Myotis* sp. were also recorded at 21:56 and 22:36

4.0 DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

Bats

- 4.1 This property has been subject to a bat Preliminary Roost Assessment survey and a visual assessment for nesting birds on 30th April 2021 by Mick Smith MCIEEM (NRW bat licence number: S089441/1) and Jack Halpin (ACIEEM) of Wildbanks Conservation. No evidence of bats using the building was seen during the visual assessment. Roosting opportunities for bats are limited with only minor gaps associated with the brick work and roof structure (Plates 3 and 4). The building was classified as having low potential for roosting bats and as such one bat emergence survey was undertaken on 17/05/21, in line with national guidance.
- 4.2 No bats were recorded roosting within the building during the nocturnal survey and bat activity levels were considered very low with only up to 5 passes recorded by a single surveyor all night. As such, the development can proceed without further survey work in relation to bats.
- 4.3 The development consists of the demolition of the existing building, with features that have the potential for roosting bats. It is recommended that new bat roosts are included within the new development to maintain and improve

the long-term opportunities for roosting bats on site. This is in line within recommendations within Planning policies that developments should increase opportunities for biodiversity. The following should be incorporated into the new building.

- Installation of 2 x Kent style bat boxes on mature trees within the garden of Rose Hill Lodge.

Breeding birds

- 4.4 No evidence of breeding birds was found within the property during the survey. Possible nesting opportunities do exist and as such works should be carried out following a precautionary approach. If evidence of nesting birds are identified prior to works taking place, works should stop and advice sought from an ecologist.

5.0 LEGISLATION

- 5.1 All bat species are protected in the UK under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The species is also protected under Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the EC Habitats Directive). This has been transposed into UK law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) in England and Wales. Bats are referred to as European Protected Species (EPS).
- 5.2 It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat; intentionally or recklessly disturb in a way that would affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, or breed. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a bat roost and to possess, advertise, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat.
- 5.3 If work is proposed that would affect an EPS then a licence will be required. Natural England (NE), in exercise of the powers conferred under regulation 53(1) and 56(3) (a) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, may issue licences for the following purposes:
- Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
 - Preventing the spread of disease;
 - Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other form of property or to fisheries; to allow people to carry out activities which would otherwise be illegal.
- 5.4 Before issuing a licence under the Habitats Regulations, the licensing authority must be satisfied that “there is no satisfactory alternative” to the work as proposed and, that the proposed actions “will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status (FCS)”.
- 5.5 To ensure these requirements are met, the licensing authority must have enough information to complete an assessment of the application. This includes sufficient survey data so that the roost and how it is used by bats is understood

and impacts upon the roost are appropriately assessed so that mitigation and/or compensation can be designed into the proposed development that will ensure the bat population can be incorporated and maintained in the long term.

5.6 Seven bat species are UK BAP Priority Species. These are as follows:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhino ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*
- Common noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*.

5.7 Under the NERC Act, local authorities (and other public bodies) have a duty to conserve biodiversity the local authority must take the protection of the priority habitat into consideration when it is making a planning decision.

6.0 REFERENCES

- CIEEM (2013). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Winchester. CIEEM.
- Collins, J (ed.). 2016. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust. London.
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *National Planning Policy Framework*.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough
- Natural England (2010). *European Protected Species and the Planning Process*.
- Altringham, J (2003). *British Bats*. Harper Collins, London

A1 APPENDIX – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

A1.1 Plate 1: View of the extension to be replaced



A1.2 Plate 2: View facing South



A1.3 Plate 3: View showing ridge tiles well sealed and slate roof in good condition



A1.4 Plate 4: Weep hole within brick work providing potential bat access to roof



Figure 1: Location Plan

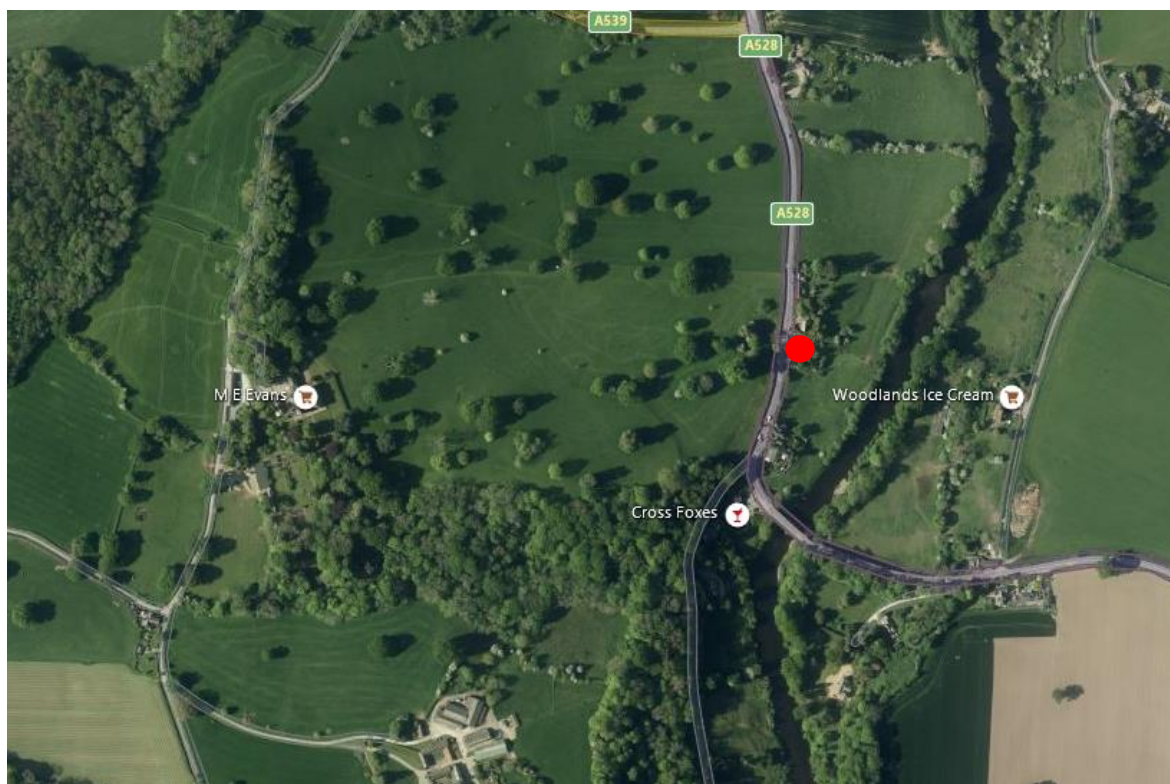


Figure 2: Site Plan

