

The Ark, Littleborough Bat Method Statement

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Dunelm Ecology has been asked to provide ecological services in relation to a planning application that would involve conversion and alterations to an existing detached garage in order to create an after school club facility. Rochdale Borough Council has requested that: *'no development shall take place until a precautionary working method statement for bats has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority'*. The method statement has been requested to ensure that measures are put in place to safeguard protected species prior to the commencement of the construction process.
- 1.1.2 Taking the above information into consideration and following information supplied by the scheme architect, the remainder of this document, therefore, represents a Method Statement that should be strictly adhered to by the owners and building contractors to prevent contravention of bat legislation. Included are measures to prevent death, injury or disturbance to bats and roost loss/damage. The existence of this Method Statement would help establish a defence against prosecution for intentional, deliberate or reckless disturbance to bats or damage to the roost.

1.2 Legislative Context

- 1.2.1 All British bat species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, which has been amended by later legislation, including the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Taken together, the above legislation makes it an offence to:
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat.
 - deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat,
 - deliberately disturb bats, in such a way as –
 - i) to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear their young, or
 - ii) to hibernate or migrate, or
 - iii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of bats;
 - damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.
- 1.2.2 Under the 2019 Regulations it is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place whether a bat is in occupation or not.

2 Methods and Approach

2.1 Sensitive Working Methods

The building appears to offer negligible roost suitability with tight fitting asbestos tiles and metal soffits with no gaps under the eaves. The building is also located in an urban location next to a busy road, further reducing the likelihood of bats being present. Nonetheless, all roof tiles, soffits and under-felt must be carefully removed by hand under the supervision of a licensed bat ecologist while contractors would be given a toolbox talk prior to works commencing. In the unlikely event of a bat or bat droppings being recorded, work must stop and a licence obtained from Natural England.