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Dusk Survey Results

June 2024

Lower Town House Farm

Townhouse Road

Littleborough

OL15 9JX

National Grid Reference: SD 93688 17160



Lower Town House Farm, Townhouse Road, Littleborough, OL15 9JX
Dusk Survey Results in Relation to Bats

Document Title	Dusk Survey Results
Prepared for	Quality Creative Design
Prepared by	Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

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Executive Summary

As part of a proposed planning application at Lower Town House Farm, Littleborough Tyrer Ecological Consultants conducted a daytime inspection in 2024.

Bats:

The site, Lower Town House Farm was categorised as pertaining to ‘**Moderate**’ bat roost suitability in line with Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines and therefore two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken at the site in May 2024.

From the dusk survey results, it can be concluded that whilst using best practice survey methodology, emergence of bats was observed at Lower Town House Farm, see recommendations in Section 5.0-6.0 in relation to bats.

Survey Validity:

Bat emergence/re-entry surveys are typically **valid for a period of 12-18 months**; Ideally, the survey data should be from the most recent optimal survey season before a planning or licence application is submitted, however this is at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority and/or Natural England. Should your planning application not achieve consent, or a licence application (where required) not be applied for within this time period, updated surveys may be required.

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1.0 Background and Introduction

- 1.1 As part of a proposed planning application at Lower Town House Farm, Littleborough, Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd conducted a daytime assessment in relation to bats & breeding birds in December 2021 and two dusk surveys were subsequently undertaken in June 2022. As part of this survey a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was carried out, which concluded the following:

“Bats: Based upon the findings of the survey covered through sections 6.0-7.0 of the report, the Barn surveyed was roundly categorised to offer ‘Moderate’ bat roost suitability in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016), whilst the immediate environment offers a favourable environment for foraging and commuting bats.”

- 1.2 Although dusk surveys were previously carried out in 2022, they are considered to now out of date and are no longer valid, as a result, updated dusk surveys have been carried out at Lower Town House Farm in 2024.
- 1.3 It is understood that the proposals involve the conversion of the existing barn for residential use.
- 1.4 Tyrer Ecological Consultants were therefore re-commissioned by Quality Creative Design to carry out the updated recommended bat surveys at Lower Town House Farm; the two dusks surveys were carried out in May 2024 in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023) edition (see **Figure 1.1**).

Table 7.2. Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).		
Low roost suitability or PRF-I	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability or PRF-M
One survey visit. One dusk emergence survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .	Three separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .

Figure 1.1 - Extract from *Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023)*

- 1.5 The results, conclusions and recommendations following the survey, including any indicative mitigation to inform an application to Natural England for a European protected species mitigation licence (EPSML), where necessary, will be supplied within this report.
- 1.6 This report should be read, understood and presented to the local authority as an additional document to Appendix I (see Contents page).
- 1.7 In accordance with *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development* (CIEEM et al, 2019), measures have been recommended proportionate to anticipated impacts to ensure that the proposed development results in a biodiversity net gain.

2.0 Bats - Legislation & Policy

2.1 All British bats and their ****roosts**¹ are afforded protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (EPS) (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the Regulations, that has a statutory duty as the local authority to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

2.2 Use of Buildings by Bats

- a) Summer breeding roost (May-August)
- b) Hibernation roost (October-March)
- c) Transitional or temporary roost (other months)

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

*** The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) (Regulation 43 (d) the term roost is not used but refers to “a breeding site or resting place of such an animal” and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used, is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.*

Policy

2.3 Paragraph 180 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in July 2021) states:

180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

¹ ******The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) (Regulation 43 (d) the term roost is not used but refers to “a breeding site or resting place of such an animal” and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁶³ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and,

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

- 2.4 This national focus on the conservation of biodiversity and the natural environment is further echoed in Policy G7 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, entitled 'Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity', which states:

"We will ensure that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection. Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, creating new sites and features of interest and improving opportunities for public enjoyment will be supported. No development should result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity interest in the borough and overall development in the borough should result in a net gain."

This policy goes on to state:

"It is important to ensure that statutorily protected sites are given very strong protection e.g. the borough's SSSI's, SPA and SAC's. Details in respect of requirements for new developments on or adjacent to the European Protected Sites will be contained within the Allocations DPD. Where a development has the potential to affect the conservation interests of a site protected by European legislation, we will require full assessment of any impacts and mitigation measures, including Habitats Regulations Assessment as well as any required Environmental Assessment. For non-statutorily designated sites, development should not adversely affect its core ecological value and extent and wherever possible avoid and fully mitigate any impacts. Proposals should also take full account of protected species interest and the need to maintain existing population levels and minimise unavoidable impacts on either protected species or their habitats. It should be noted that 'brownfield' sites can be of significant biodiversity interest, and can also contribute to wider ecological networks, and this must be taken into account."

3.0 Survey Methods

- 3.1 The survey was carried out in line with the Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023).
- 3.2 Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023) edition states:-

“The guidelines do not aim to either override or replace knowledge and experience. It is accepted that departures from the guidelines (e.g. either decreasing or increasing the number of surveys carried out or using alternative methods) are often appropriate... The guidance should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive.”

Relative to the above the survey protocol has been determined using the collective and long standing experience of Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd and knowledge of the specific nature of the site.

Survey Protocol

- 3.3 In accordance with Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023), it is specified that: *“The bat active period is generally considered to be between April and October inclusive”*, though the period of **May – August** is the optimal most productive period that Natural England accept bat surveys and grant species development licences in relation to bats.
- 3.4 The timing of the surveys was in May, at a time when bats are within their active season, this is generally accepted as May – August across the industry.
- 3.5 Where bats are roosting, they are likely to be detected by the ecologists who are trained in the use of bat detector hardware and call analysis software, and specifically how to detect bats and to correctly identify / disseminate bat calls.
- 3.6 When considering survey protocol, the decisions about whether dusk or dawn surveys are selected are based on the extensive experience of Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, the nature of the building and species that can be anticipated as being present either at the property or in the locality as well as any visual limitations at the survey site.
- 3.7 In this case, the bat roost potential at the structure and the lack of visual limitations present meant that a dawn survey was considered unnecessary as it would not provide any further information when compared to a dusk emergence survey. Furthermore, at dawn, temperatures are usually lower than at dusk, and as a result bat activity can be less frequent, in some locations.
- 3.8 BCT states in the 4th edition of bat survey guidelines 2024 in relation to dawn surveys that:

“The routine use of roost re-entry surveys (previously known as dawn surveys) for presence/absence has been removed from this edition of the guidelines. This is due to (a) the use of NVAs increasing the accuracy of dusk emergence surveys, and (b) the variability in roost re-entry times within and between species.”

- 3.9 Survey protocol should not be determined by parties who are 1) not familiar with the site, and 2) do not have a sufficient level of experience in relation to the undertaking of dusk/dawn bat surveys.
- 3.10 The number of surveys and surveyors was adequate relative to the roost potential that was identified during the daytime appraisal – i.e. **'Moderate'** potential. Three surveyors were required to accurately monitor potential roost features (PRF's) on the building at any one time.
- 3.11 Surveyors were strategically positioned so that all elevations with bat roost potential, as described in the daytime report, could be observed without limitation. The surveyors were aided with Anabat SD2, Batlogger M & M2, Echometer EM2, Peersonic RPA3, or equivalent electronic bat detectors that enable the locating and recording of the high frequency calls that are emitted by bats; echolocation calls were analysed the next day using Analook, Kaleidoscope, BatExplorer or equivalent computer software to verify field observations. Where deemed appropriate by the attending ecologists, elevations were also surveyed via the use of a Night Visual Aid (NVA) Camera (Panasonic HC-VXF990) and Night Fox Whisker – recordings would be subject to review the following day to identify emergences / flight lines and species / abundance.

Survey Limitations

- 3.12 The first 20 minutes of the second survey were rainy, although this is not deemed to be a significant constraint due to the rain clearing prior to emergence time.
- 3.13 Having carefully considered the results and conclusions derived from all surveys to date, no significant constraints were experienced that might hinder the gathering of ecological data on which to base sound conclusions and recommendations.

4.0 Results

Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on 6th and 27th May 2024 by three surveyors; surveyor credentials have been given within **Table 4.1**. Tables **4.2-4.3** alongside **Figure 4.1-4.5** document the results of the dusk survey.

Table 4.1 - Surveyor Credentials

Surveyor(s)	Experience	Surveyor Credentials
Mr. S. Irwin	30+ years	Highly experienced Bat Specialist with Natural England Class 2 License (CLS-13604). Has provided a catalogue of bespoke mitigation schemes as part of successful granted mitigation licences in England and Wales. Natural Resources Wales bat licence. (Licence no. 73156:OTH:CSAB:2016) Barn owl (CI29/00039)
Mr. H. Green	30+ years	Highly experienced Bat Specialist and carer whom has professional surveying experience over decades with Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd - Class 2 Natural England Bat Licence (CLS-03290)
Mr. M. Smith	7 years	An experienced seasonal bat surveyor with Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd
Ms. H. Taylor-Boyd	8 years	A highly experienced bat surveyor with several years' experience with Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd
Mr. D. Boyd	8 years	A highly experienced bat surveyor with several years' experience with Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

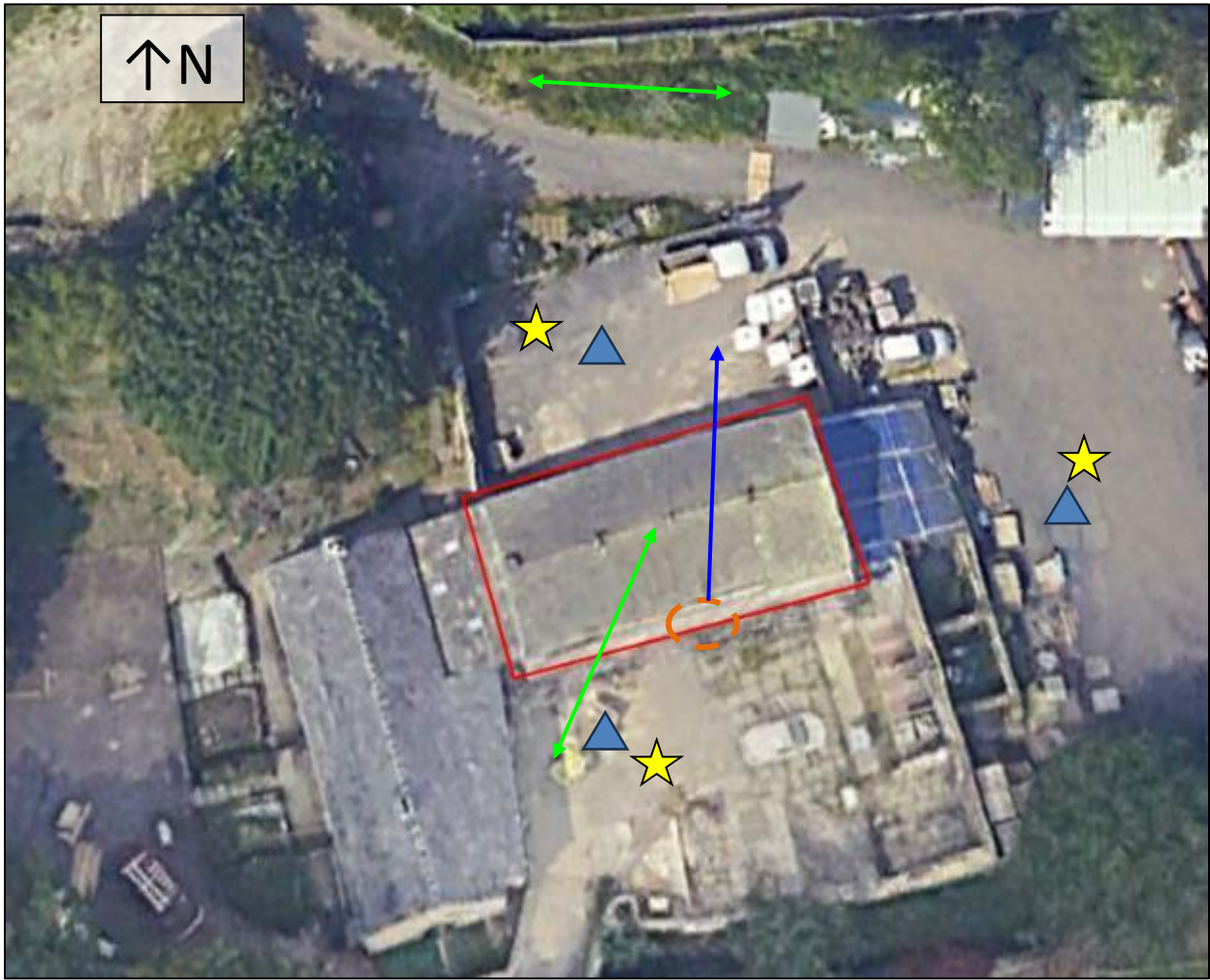
Table 4.2 – Survey dates, times and weather conditions

Times of Surveys	Date	Weather Conditions
Dusk survey 1 2028-2215	6 th May 2024	Sunset: 2043: Dry, light breeze 100% Cloud Cover Start temp: 16 ° C End temp: 12 ° C
Dusk survey 2 2102-2300	27 th May 2024	Sunset: 2122: Rain at start, light breeze 100% Cloud Cover Start temp: 11 ° C End temp: 10 ° C

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Table 4.3 – Dusk Survey Results

Dusk Survey	Time	Activity
06/05/2024	2028-2215	Summary: Emergence of 1x common pipistrelle from under rooftile on the southern elevation 2059-2130hrs: 3X Common pipistrelle (CP) foraging within the immediate vicinity in and out of the barn and along treeline to north 2102hrs: CP emergence from rooftiles on the southern elevation EM1 then commuted over roof in a northerly direction 2105hrs: CP pass overhead General activity consisted of emergence from a single common pipistrelle and foraging by a maximum of three individuals
27/05/2024	2102-2300	Summary: Emergence of 2x common pipistrelles from an internal roost. 2137hrs: CP feeding inside the barn 2138-2200hrs: CP feeding to the north of the building 2140hrs: CP emergence from open doorway on the northern elevation EM2 then commuted northwest towards the treeline 2149hrs: CP emergence from open window EM3 on the northern elevation then flew east 2155hrs: CP feeding to the east of the building General activity consisted of emergence of x2 common pipistrelles alongside foraging and commuting by a single common pipistrelle.



Dusk Survey 1 – 06/05/2024

Key			
	Site Boundary		Foraging activity
	Surveyor Positions		Commuting activity
	Directional compass		NVA
	Emergence point		

Figure 4.1 - Visual Aid - Dusk Survey Results with Key



Dusk Survey 2- 27/05/2024

Key			
	Site Boundary		Foraging activity
	Surveyor Positions		Commuting activity
	Directional compass		NVA
	Emergence point		

Figure 4.2 - Visual Aid - Dusk Survey Results with Key



Figure 4.3 – Emergence points 1, 2 & 3 on the surveyed structure (© Google Earth Pro 2022/23)

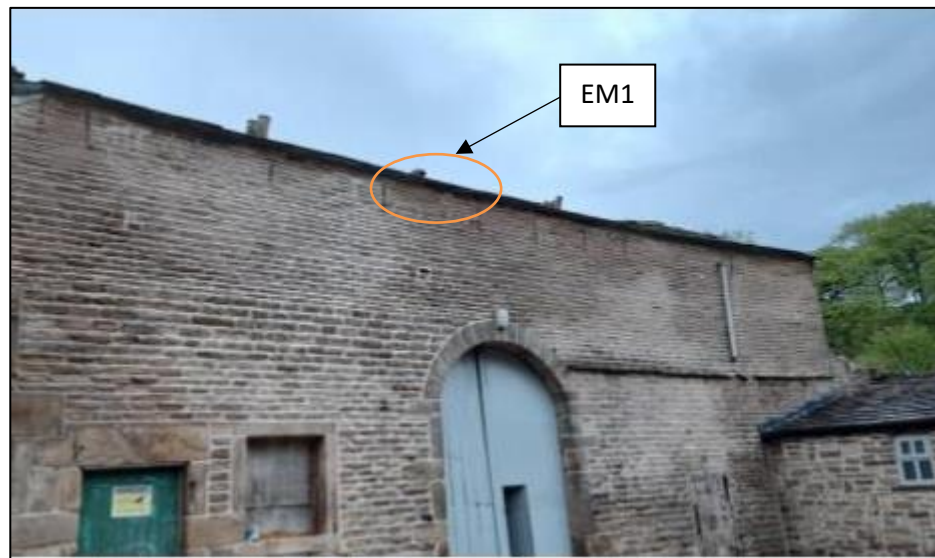


Figure 4.4 – Emergence points 2 & 3 on the surveyed structure

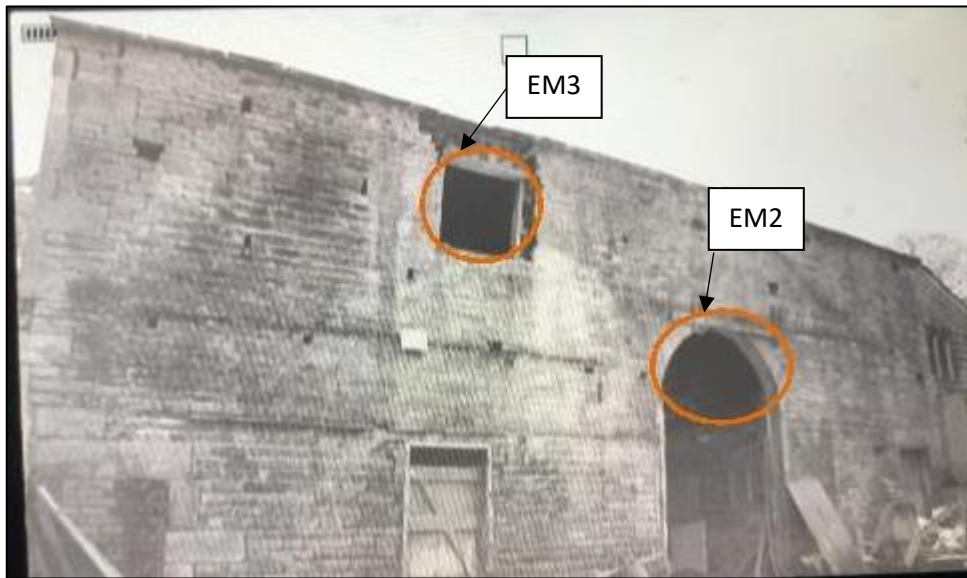


Figure 4.5 – *Emergence points 2 & 3 on the surveyed structure*

5.0 Survey Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.1 The survey results gathered by Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd conclude that the barn at Lower Town House Farm is being used by three common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bats for roosting purposes. Based upon the evidence, the building is host to three 'Day roost' two located within internal crevices in the barn in addition to a roost under a roof tile of the southern elevation.
- 5.2 Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed. (2016) describes a 'Day roost' as:
- "a place where individual bats, or small groups of males, rest or shelter in the day but are rarely found by night in the summer"*.
- 5.3 The full extent of the proposed works are understood to involve the conversion of the barn on site; the likely destruction of a bat roost will therefore need to be addressed from both a conservation and legal perspective along with the application of appropriate mitigation. A European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) will be required to legally destroy places that are actively used for breeding, rest or shelter (roost) by bats, however, before a licence can be applied for all planning issues need to be resolved.
- 5.4 In order that the LPA can implement its obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579), appropriate and proportionate mitigation will need to accompany the planning application which will demonstrate that the *"favourable conservation"* of the species concerned can be maintained.
- 5.5 Installation of new lighting as part of a development scheme that exceeds current levels may have a negative impact upon foraging/commuting bats confirmed as present in the vicinity, particularly if increased light spillage occurs in areas currently free from illumination such as illumination of boundary features. There are several measures that can be used to offset impacts upon bats, where lighting is unavoidable; these include, however are not limited to, the light source used and luminaire design, and accessories to direct light at its intended target. Numerous software programmes are currently available which can be used inform lighting plans, demonstrating how lighting decisions will illuminate a site. Refer to the Bat Conservation Lighting Guidelines for further strategic information if applicable.

6.0 Indicative Mitigation

6.1 From the evidence gained during the dusk surveys, the use of the barn by bats is considered to be of 'low' level significance relatable to common pipistrelle bats and their current status (as according to - English Nature: Bat Mitigation Guidelines 2004); the proposed mitigation is proportionate to that use. However, if at any time that assessment is revised to a higher level, then the mitigation will also be accordingly revised.

6.2 The following procedures and mitigation recommendations are designed to allow the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in association with their ecological advisers, to determine a Planning Application where a European Protected Species has been identified and will be affected by the work for which the Planning Application seeks consent.

In addition, Local Planning Authorities in accordance with the obligations placed upon them by way of their duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579) have to take into consideration the presence of a European Protected species (EPS) before determination of an application where it/they have been identified.

6.3 The LPA need to consider the mitigation in relation to the potential success of a Natural England licence application and/or if in their opinion the mitigation is considered as being appropriate, or if it is over and above what is required; if they determine that the mitigation is appropriate then a Planning Condition should be attached requiring the roost provision to be implemented.

If the LPA consider that the mitigation is over what is necessary but require "enhancement" as part of their Local Biodiversity/Net-Gain Planning Policies this should be included in the terms of Consent. The acting bat ecologist deems the proposed new roost creation as appropriate and not over and above what is required.

6.4 **Notwithstanding that Planning Consent is granted or equally if the work is undertaken outside of the planning system, whereby projects that do not require planning consent may affect bats or their roost, including disturbance, it does not absolve the applicant, site owner, developer or any other party involved with the work from ensuring that an application is made for a Natural England development licence, to legally undertake work that will affect bat(s) or their roost(s).**

If work is undertaken without a licence and bat(s) or their roost(s) is/are affected then a breach of current wildlife legislation will occur for which penalties are severe.

6.5 Under Regulation 53(1) and 56(3)(a) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579), a licence is required prior to disturbing bats or destroying/damaging or obstructing any place that is used by bats as a resting place or breeding site. The licence is issued by the EPS Licensing Team of Natural England.

6.6 The conversion of the barn at Lower Town House Farm is the key component of the applicant's plans for the site; however, it is acknowledged that the presence of roosting bats needs to be addressed from both a legal and conservation perspective.

The mitigation proposals outlined in this report are seen to be the most productive way forward, should retention not be an option, that will retain long term roosting opportunities for bats.

- 6.7 To ensure that bats are not left without a roost while the work takes place one Schwegler 2F bat box (or suitable equivalent) will be erected on a suitable tree in proximity to the survey area (See **Figure 6.1**). The box will serve as a receptor bat box for if bats have to be captured by hand and translocated to it by a suitably licenced Ecologist or named agent during the works schedule; it will be retained permanently following the works.



Figure 6.1 – Proposed location of receptor bat box []

Assigned Ecological Clerk of Works - EcOW

- 6.8 At the pre-commencement stage a suitably qualified Ecologist is to undertake an induction 'toolbox talk' on possible bat presence and present/discuss document features taken from the license i.e. License, Method Statement, Mitigation Figures and Work Schedule to be kept on site for the duration of the work.

Prior to any work being undertaken the presence/absence bats as far as is possible will be established by undertaking detailed investigation of the areas at which bats have been observed using the building, at any internal crevices within the barn. The ecologist will supervise careful dismantling of all places that will be removed as part of the proposed work which have been identified as offering roost access or roost potential at the ecologist's discretion. In addition, wherever opportunities for bats exist in other parts of the building the supervised dismantling will extend to these areas with strategies for safely removing bat(s), as long as a maternity colony is considered not to have taken up occupancy of the building.

All dismantling of roost features will be undertaken during favourable weather conditions. An increase in external lighting is expected during the conversion; should additional lighting be installed it must be directed away from any bat roost access points, flight paths and foraging areas.

Mitigation proposed is subject to the approval of the Natural England EPS team; all proposed roost provisions outlined hereafter will be dedicated for bats and permanent.

6.9 Work undertaken by the Ecologist

Capture/Exclusion: Once an EPSML licence is in place the contractor will provide a safe means of access to allow the ecologist to investigate the confirmed roost area for bat presence at Lower Townhouse Farm.

In addition, wherever opportunities for bats exist in other parts of the building the supervised dismantling will extend to these areas at the discretion of the ecologist in attendance. In the event of bat(s) being present, it/they will be removed, placed in a secure box with soft tissue and immediately transferred into a receptor bat box that will have previously been erected on a tree nearby as indicated in **Figure 6.1**. Once it has been established by the ecologist that bat(s) are absent the building works will continue to completion.

In the unlikely event that bats are found outside of supervision time, then as legal requirement and conditions of the granted licence work will immediately cease and the ecologist contacted for further advice; contractors must not touch, handle or in any way cause bats to move.

6.10 Work undertaken by the Contractor

A number of viable ingress points and roosting opportunities were identified on the building, it is likely that many of these features will be lost during the conversion of the building; new roost provision is therefore recommended to be built into the design of the converted dwelling at Lower Town House Farm (See **Figure 6.2** below for location) (the below mitigation measures are indicative and to be finalised subject to the provision of development plans during the EPSML application):

- New roosting provision will be re-created in the form of x3 bat slates:
- <https://www.nhbs.com/habibat-bat-access-slate>
- New roosting provision will be recreated in the form of x2 ridge tile access points (see below for details)



Figure 6.2 - Proposed bat tile locations shown by (▲); ridge tile access shown by (■)

Bat Access Slate

The Habibat Bat Access Slate has been carefully designed to provide much needed access to roof space for our protected bat species, whilst blending in seamlessly to your slate roof. The Bat Access Slate consists of a standard sized slate, with a capped vent which allows access to roof felt (for roosting Pipistrelles). A bitumen roofing felt or equivalent must be installed as opposed to a breathable membrane, Breathable BRM membrane can cause significant problems where bats are in contact with it, whereby their fine claws become entangled within the fibres of the membrane, entrapping and killing bats.

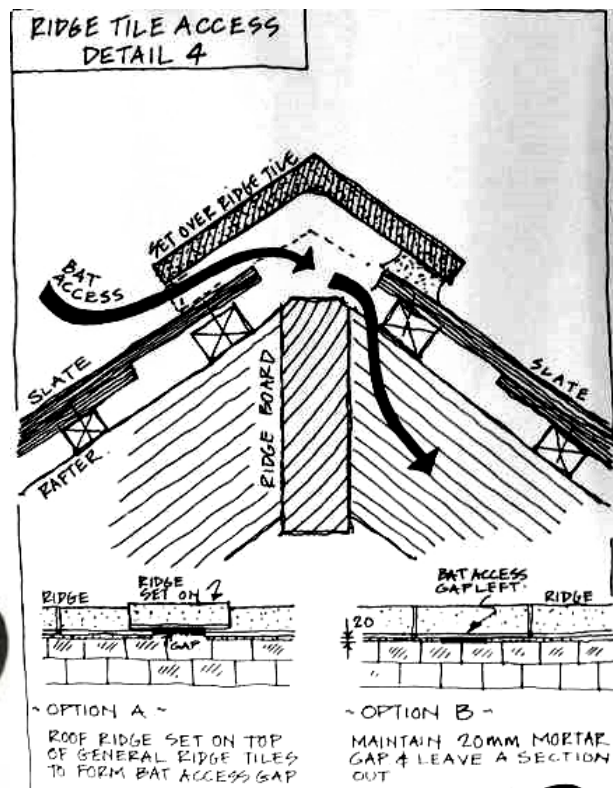
These Access Slates are endorsed by the Bat Conservation Trust.



Ridge access

Where appropriated, ridge tile access should be made with the incorporation of traditional Bitumen 1F underfelt immediately beneath ridge tiles.

Ridge tile access should be made with the incorporation of traditional Bitumen 1F underfelt immediately beneath ridge tiles. Breathable BRM membrane can cause significant problems where bats are in contact with it, whereby their fine claws become entangled within the fibres of the membrane, entrapping and killing bats.



7.0 References

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