

Bat Survey Report and Method Statement European Protected Species (Bats)

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

**Rakewood Higher Mill,
Rakewood Road,
Hollingworth,
OL15 0AP**

24.11.2022



**Report prepared by:
Dave Anderson
Batworker.com
dave@batworker.com
07894 338290**

Executive summary

In November 2022 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of Rakewood Higher Mill, Rakewood Road, Hollingworth, OL15 0AP to assess the potential for impact on protected species.

The survey was carried out to support a change of use of the northern section of the mill, the reopening of a window space and installation of an external stairway.

A preliminary bat roost assessment survey was carried out on 22nd November 2022. The building, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat was observed to have a negligible level of bat roost potential.

The survey found no physical evidence, in the form of droppings, urine splashing, grease staining or feeding remains, to suggest bats using the building to roost at a time of year when evidence would be expected to be present.

Previous bat surveys in 2017, 2018, and 2019 carried out as part of monitoring work have not recorded bats using the mill building for the purposes of roosting.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of building and that the presence of a significant or low conservation value bat roost is unlikely on site.

“The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others”. - Mitchell-Jones, A (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines. English Nature.

It is considered unlikely that low conservation value roosts are present within the buildings, however reasonable avoidance measures are recommended within this report.

The overall purpose of the Method Statement is to ensure that bats and their roosts are fully protected to ensure the ‘favourable conservation status of the species’.

This method statement is designed to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to bats. By following the Reasonable Avoidance Measures and mitigation included in this document the work can take place, ensuring the Continued Ecological Functionality of the site.

Site Location

Rakewood Higher Mill, Rakewood Road, Hollingworth, OL15 0AP

NGR: SD9451914198



Surrounding Habitat



The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat a mosaic of semi natural deciduous woodland, scrub, improved and semi improved grassland. Riparian woodland cover associated with Longden End Brook provides connectivity to the wider landscape and in particular Hollingworth Lake to the north.

Connectivity to the wider landscape is good. Bat foraging potential is moderate to high.

Survey summary and site assessment

Pre-existing information on the bat species present at this site.

A search of the MAGIC website revealed no EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

Previous bat surveys in 2017, 2018, and 2019 carried out as part of monitoring work have not recorded bats using the mill building for the purposes of roosting. However common pipistrelle bat maternity roosts are located within residential buildings to the west of the building.

From personal experience of surveying for and researching bats in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria, the following species were considered.

Common Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Soprano Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Whiskered/Brandt's – species often found roosting in buildings close to woodland.

Natterer's – a typical upland bat with foraging bats being recorded high on heather moorland. Often roosting in barns.

Daubenton's – a species commonly associated with aquatic habitats.

Long Eared bat – a woodland species which has been recorded foraging over in bye meadows and rough grassland sites. Often roosting in barns.

Survey Personnel.

Personnel on surveys included: David Anderson, an experienced ecologist and bat researcher with 25 years experience of fieldwork and bat ecology, a founder member of the East Lancashire Bat Group and 'Batworker.com', formerly a Natural History Curator and manager of the East Lancashire Biological Records Centre. (Natural England licence No:2015-15784-CLS-CLS, Conservation, Science and Education).

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Preliminary Roost Assessment	22.11.2022	1 Hour

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the interior and exterior of the building was possible and good visual inspection at ground level was possible. Evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings or staining on external walls and surfaces is frequently removed by the action of wind and rain; apparent absence of evidence is therefore evaluated with caution.

In many situations it is not possible to inspect every locations where bats are present therefore it should be assumed that an absence of bat evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence that bats are absent.

Some species such as pipistrelle sp bats are opportunistic and it is possible for individuals to be found during works, even where surveys have had negative results during preliminary and activity surveys.

Preliminary Roost Assessment



The property consists of a two storey wing of Rakewood Mill located to the north of the mill complex. External walls are generally well pointed with no obvious cracks, gaps or crevices located in areas affected by proposed works. Some crumbling brickwork was observed however the resulting gaps are shallow, exposed and remain sealed from any cavity.

The flat roof has a solar array present. The concrete roof panels are unlined to the interior and exposed with no loft space present. Guttering is close fitting.

Some gaps are present around a duct installed within an upper floor bricked up window on the north eastern aspect, and the duct is timber boarded to the interior, however inspection via endoscope revealed no evidence to suggest use by bats or nesting birds.

The building can be considered to offer negligible potential for roosting bats when the condition of the building, and location is considered.





Timber boarding to interior of duct present within bricked up window.

An internal inspection of the building revealed no evidence to suggest the use of bats, such as scattered or concentrated areas of bat droppings, urine splashing, feeding remains or grease staining, at a time of year when such evidence could be expected.

Interpretation of results

A preliminary bat roost assessment survey was carried out on 22nd November 2022. The building, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat was observed to have a negligible level of bat roost potential.

The survey found no physical evidence, in the form of droppings, urine splashing, grease staining or feeding remains, to suggest bats using the building to roost at a time of year when evidence would be expected to be present.

Previous bat surveys in 2017, 2018, and 2019 carried out as part of monitoring work have not recorded bats using the mill building for the purposes of roosting.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of building and that the presence of a significant or low conservation value bat roost is unlikely on site.

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It is considered unlikely that low conservation value roosts are present within the building, however reasonable avoidance measures are recommended within this report, given the close proximity of observed common pipistrelle bat activity and presence of roosts within neighbouring buildings..

Impact Assessment

Short-term impacts – Disturbance Low risk:

Long-term impacts - Roost loss: No impact on a local bat population.

Long-term impacts - Fragmentation and isolation:

Minimal risk, the impact of the proposed development on local bat species will be insignificant.

Predicted scale of impact: No loss of roosting sites of a common and relatively widespread species.

Method Statement and Reasonable Avoidance Measures

The overall purpose of the Method Statement is to ensure that bats and their roosts are fully protected to ensure the 'favourable conservation status of the species'. The Method statement is designed to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to roosting bats.

Common pipistrelle bats are considered an opportunistic species and it is possible for individuals to be found during works, even where surveys have had negative results during preliminary and activity surveys.

A Method Statement is normally required by the local planning authority to ensure that procedures are in place before the development works are carried out and will form part of the EPS Licence application where necessary.

No work should commence without contractors receiving a toolbox talk.

All contractors will be made aware of the legal protection afforded all species of bats in the UK and procedures will be in place to mitigate for the potential impact on bats before any building work is undertaken.

Timing of works

Work to affected window spaces should take place following an evening temperature of +5c

Work to affected areas will take place under supervision, with the batworker 'on call'.

Timbers should be removed by hand and under supervision where necessary.

In the unlikely event bats are found during works. The area should be carefully covered and work stop until the batworker can attend to assess the appropriate way forward.

Compensatory bat boxes (two Greenwood Eco Habitats three crevice box)es or similar) will be placed on site prior to work commencing and will remain on site as part of proposed biodiversity enhancement.

A copy of the Method Statement should be available to site / project managers in advance of any works being carried out.

The existence of a Method Statement helps to establish a defence against prosecution for intentional (WCA), deliberate (Habitat Regulations.) or reckless (WCA) disturbance of bats or damage to roosts. All work should take place under the supervision of the ecologist.