

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

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

**Yew Tree Farm South,
Middleton,
Manchester,
M24 6XJ**

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Executive summary

In April 2024 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of outbuildings at Yew Tree Farm South, Middleton, Manchester, M24 6XJ to assess the potential for impact on protected species to support a proposed residential development.

A previous survey carried out in 2016 found no evidence to suggest use of the site by roosting bats and observed bat activity during an emergence survey was recorded as “generally low”.

A preliminary bat roost assessment survey was carried out on 20th June 2024, buildings on site were assessed as offering low potential for roosting bats, when location, surrounding habitat, and previous survey results were taken into consideration.

No evidence to suggest use by Barn Owl was observed.

Static bat detector monitoring in June and July 2024 recorded a low level of predominately Common Pipistrelle bat activity at times consistent with bats arriving on site to forage from one hour after sunset. Typically 5 to 15 bat passes were recorded. No social calling or “roost chatter” was recorded in the hours before dawn which would be typical of bats returning to roost.

A single emergence survey carried out in August 2024 confirmed the absence of roosting bats, with only low levels of Common Pipistrelle bat activity being recorded during surveys. Two Common Pipistrelle bats were observed to arrive on site from the south and forage around the rear of the outbuildings before dispersing to the north east.

Given the combination of a lack of physical evidence within buildings, and emergence survey results, survey effort is considered sufficient to characterise the roost potential of the barn and outbuildings and confirm absence of roosting bats.

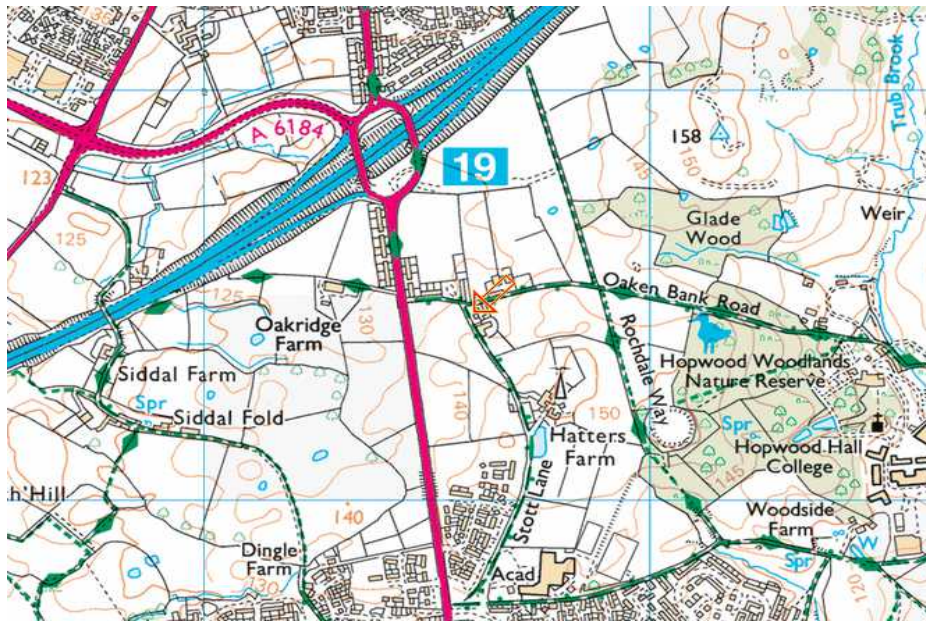
“The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others”. - Mitchell-Jones, A (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines.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

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

Yew Tree Farm South, Middleton, Manchester, M24 6XJ
NGR: SD8660708482



Surrounding Habitat



The property is located in a semi rural position with surrounding habitat dominated by improved and semi improved grassland, with some hedgerow and scattered tree cover present on field boundaries, ancient and semi natural deciduous woodland is present to the east and south east of the site.

The presence of the M62 motorway (approximately 350m to the north) and associated traffic noise can be expected to have a negative effect on bat activity (*Berthinussen, A. & Altringham, J. (2012) The effect of a major road on bat activity and diversity. Journal of Applied Ecology, 49, 82-89.*).

Bat foraging potential was assessed as low to moderate.

Site Description.



Position of buildings within Yew Tree Farm South

The property consists of a disused two storey brick built barn and associated agricultural outbuildings at Yew Tree Farm South. The main barn had a double pitched stone slate roof, and adjoins a series of single skin single storey outbuildings with corrugated fibreboard roofs which form an L shape to a two storey brick built barn at the northern boundary of the farm.

The buildings have a mixture of single skin and double brick walls without cavities and exposed wall tops to the interior. External walls are generally well pointed however, owl holes and open doorways and windows allow access to the interiors.

Corrugated panelled roofs are generally unlined and exposed to the interior, although some of the stone slate roofs have a ripped roofing membrane present. Gapes behind fascia boarding where present was wide and open and considered unsuitable for roosting bats.

Overall buildings were assessed as offering low potential for roosting bats.





Survey summary and site assessment

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

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

A previous survey of the buildings (*Yew Tree Farm South, Middleton Bat Survey Report. June 2016 QUANTS environmental Ltd*) found no evidence to suggest use of the site by roosting bats and recorded bat activity as '*generally low*' with only a single Common Pipistrelle bat recorded throughout the survey period.

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). Sarah Dunham and Sharon Anderson, experienced bat surveyors assisted emergence surveys.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Visual	20.06.2024	1 Hour
Static Bat Detector Monitoring	20.06. - 04.07.24	Sunset to sunrise.
Emergence	21.08.2024	2 Hours

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the buildings 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 location 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.

Proposed Development



The proposed residential development will result in the conversion, partial demolition and replacement of existing buildings on site.

Field Survey Methodology

Visual inspection

An inspection was carried out to search for and identify potential feeding perches, roosting opportunities and signs of bat use both internally and externally.

The visual inspection focussed on searching for feeding remains and bat droppings both within the building and on external walls.

Crevices and other potential roost sites were investigated for smear/grease marks, lack of cobwebs, urine staining.

Equipment used included:

- ! Exposure Diablo 1300 lumen LED torch
- ! Teslong 6.5mm and 10mm HD video endoscopes
- ! Opticron close focusing binoculars

Visual Inspection

A visual inspection of the buildings was carried out looking for physical evidence (in the form of scattered droppings, urine splashing, feeding remains or grease marking) to suggest use by bats.

Timing of the survey was at a time of year when such evidence could be expected on suitable undisturbed horizontal surfaces.

No evidence to suggest use by bats was observed.

Static Bat Detector Monitoring.

Anabat Express static bat detectors, programmed to record bat activity from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes post sunrise was positioned within the main barn.

Resulting recordings were analysed post survey using AnalookW to confirm timing of activity and species identification. A total of 14 nights, between 20th June and 4th July 2024 were surveyed.

Throughout the survey period low levels of foraging Common Pipistrelle activity (5 to 15 bat passes) was recorded from one hour post sunset suggesting bats emerging from a distant roost and commuting onto site to forage.

No social calling or “roost chatter” was recorded in the hours before dawn which would be typical of bats returning to roost.

Emergence Survey

A single emergence survey was carried out to confirm presence/absence of roosting bats.

Surveyors equipped with Anabat Walkabout, Anabat Chorus, Anabat Swift and Echometer Touch Pro 2 full spectrum detectors were positioned covering the buildings to monitor for emerging bats.

Surveyors were assisted by Guide thermal spotting scope and Nightfox Whisker HD Infrared video cameras with infrared illuminators.

Recorded bat calls were analysed post survey using Anabat Insight software. Video footage was reviewed using a 42" 4K Samsung monitor by two surveyors.

21st August 2024

Start: 20.05

Sunset: 20.23

Finish: 22.55

Start temp: 17.8c

Finish temp: 16.7c

Could cover: 50%

Wind: Bft 1 Westerly

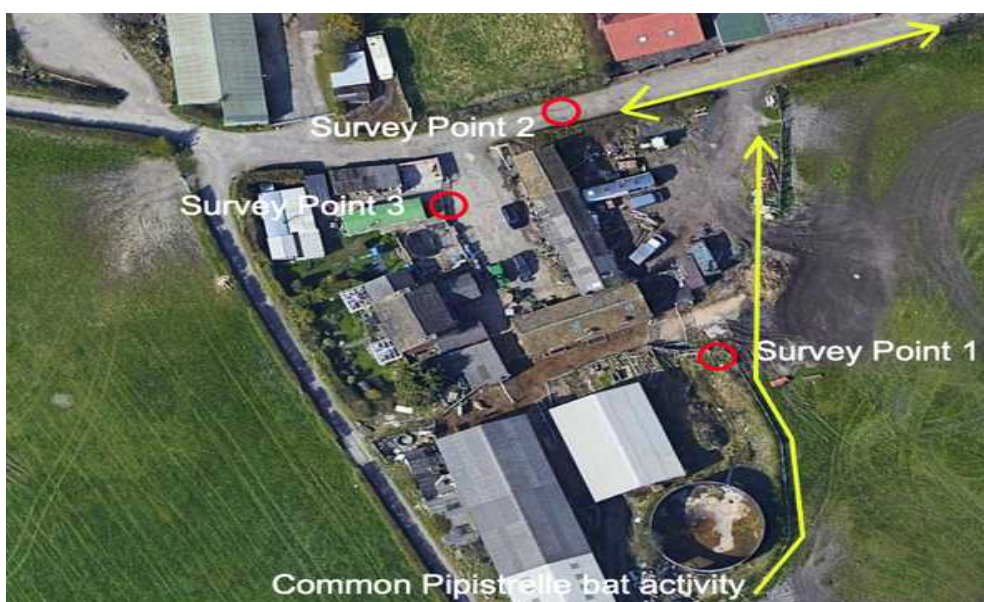
Precipitation: 0

Two Common Pipistrelle bats were observed flying from the south of the site and foraging around the rear of the buildings from 21.17 to 21.38.

A further Common Pipistrelle bat was observed foraging along a hedgerow on the south of Oaken Bank Road at 22.05, although it is possible that this was one of the bats observed earlier in the survey.

Activity was consistent with bats emerging from a distant roost and commuting onto site to forage before dispersing into the wider landscape.

No other bat activity was recorded, and no bats were observed to emerge from buildings on site.



Survey Summary

Barn Owl Survey

A daytime visual search of the buildings was made looking for typical evidence of barn owl presence.

Field signs for Barn Owl, if present, were recorded including: Urea Splashing, Owl Pellets, Feathers and Nest debris.

No evidence to suggest use by nesting Barn Owls was observed.

Nesting Birds

House sparrows were observed to be nesting below roof verges on the northern gable of the northernmost barn, and three swallow nests were observed along with a number of historic nesting sites.

Rationale for mitigation.

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Impact Assessment

Short-term impacts – Disturbance Low risk: Work carried out at a time of year when bats are expected to be absent.

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 common and relatively widespread species will occur.

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 and soprano 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 – Roof work should commence following a night temperature of 5c

Work to affected roof areas will take place under supervision of the batworker.

Roof slates should be removed by hand and under supervision where necessary.

The reverse of slates should be checked for dormant bats prior to stacking.

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.

A compensatory bat box (Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice box) will be placed on site prior to work commencing. The box should be positioned at +4m on a south east or south west facing tree trunk.

Bat boxes 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.

Nesting birds - Timing of works.

Work should commence outside the bird nesting season from March to August inclusive.

Or

Following a nesting bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than 48 hours in advance of works to ensure that no nesting birds will be harmed/disturbed during works.

If an active bird nest is detected at any point, works in that sector will immediately cease and an area of 5m radius around the nest will be cordoned off and clearly marked using hi-visibility tape and appropriate signage to prevent disturbance to nesting birds.

Any noisy machinery, or activity, will be moved at least 10m away from the location of the nest.

Works within the cordoned off area where active bird nests have been detected will only proceed once an experienced ecologist has confirmed the nests are no longer active.

Compensatory Bird Boxes.

Four House Sparrow Terrace boxes (Schwegler 1SP or equivalent) should be positioned below the eaves on west facing facades of the new houses.



Six Swallow nest cups (Schwegler 10 or equivalent) should be positioned below eaves on west facing facades of new buildings.

