



# **Preliminary Roost Assessment**

**Brandle How  
Bridekirk  
Cockermouth  
CA13 0PE  
Cumbria**

Prepared for: Megan Neesam  
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## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Executive Summary	
Background	In July 2024 Natural Ecology were instructed to undertake a preliminary roost assessment of Brandle How, Bridekirk, Cockermouth CA13 OPE (central grid reference NY 11827 33523, W3W: <a href="https://dream.haunt.protester">///dream.haunt.protester</a> ).
Site Description	The site comprises a single-storey garage attached to a two-storey house. The property is situated within its own gardens and has further residential properties to the north, east and south and farmland directly to the west.
Development Proposal	Development proposals include changing the pitch of the garage roof to allow a storage area above, with a conversion of the utility room to the rear of the garage to either a kitchen or dining room. The window currently situated on the gable end of the house above the garage (allowing light onto the staircase) will be moved to the gable end of the garage at almost the same height.
Purpose	The purpose of the survey was to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Potential Roosting Features on structures at the Site to be affected by the proposals;</li> <li>• Assess the potential value of those features for bats following the best practice guidelines;</li> <li>• Assess the potential of the surrounding habitats for foraging and commuting bats;</li> <li>• Recommend further surveys, if necessary; and</li> <li>• Recommend mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures.</li> </ul>
Results	<b>The findings confirm the area the works are proposed (the garage and wall of the main house) do not have suitability for bats. No features suitable for roosting bats was observed, and no signs of bats (droppings, staining etc) was present.</b>
Recommendations	No further surveys required.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Background

- 1.1 Natural Ecology were commissioned by Megan Neesam to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) survey of Brandle How, Bridekirk, Cockermouth CA13 OPE (NY 11827 33523) in July 2024 (hereafter referred to as the 'Building/Site').
- 1.2 The survey was carried out by David Watson under the supervision Luci Spencer, a Class 2 Natural England licenced bat ecologist.

## Survey Objectives

- 1.3 The purpose of the survey was to:
  - Identify Potential Roosting Features on structures at the Site to be affected by the proposals;
  - Assess the potential value of those features for bats following the best practice guidelines;
  - Assess the potential of the surrounding habitats for foraging and commuting bats;
  - Recommend further surveys, if necessary.
- 1.4 The following assessment is informed by the Bat Conservation Trust's publication Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed) 2023).

## 2. METHODS

### Desk Study

- 2.1 To create a baseline of the ecological conditions in the area, we reviewed and included relevant ecological information surrounding a 2km radius. This included:
- Landscape structure using Ordnance Survey base maps ([www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)) and aerial photographs from Google Earth ([www.maps.google.co.uk](http://www.maps.google.co.uk)).
  - Designated sites, habitat and granted European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) records held on <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>.

### Site Survey

- 2.2 Natural Ecology visited the site on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024 to determine the presence of bats through an inspection survey. The survey was undertaken by David Watson under the direct supervision of Lucinda Spencer – a Class 2 Natural England licensed bat ecologist. An internal and external inspection was carried out as part of this survey.
- 2.3 The survey was conducted in accordance with Bat Conservation Trusts ‘Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists.’ The rationale behind the values assigned to the suitability of a feature to support bats is shown in Table 1 on the following page.

### External Inspection of Buildings

- 2.4 A visual inspection of the buildings was undertaken to identify the suitability of the building to provide potential roost space for bats. In particular, potential access points and evidence of bats were searched for. This was carried out in full day light with the aid of binoculars, endoscope, torch and ladders (where needed) to identify the following features:
- Age and structure of the building;
  - Condition of the roof noting any missing, dislodged or lifted tiles that would provide entry;
  - Condition of the walls, doors and windows that may also provide entry;
  - Windowsills, walls and sheltered areas are searched for bat droppings; and
  - Grease marks, scratch marks and urine staining around possible entry points.

### Internal Inspection of Buildings

- 2.5 This section of the survey focuses on identifying features or areas which provide the correct environmental conditions for roosting bats and the evidence of bat activity. These include:
- Identifying dark, warm, undisturbed areas normally in the roof space such as joins in traditional roof joists and beams, behind the ridge beam or roofing felt and any cracks or crevices in the bricks or stonework that could be utilised as a roost site; and
  - The walls, floor and any flat areas such as on top of beams were examined for bat droppings, feeding remains and bat corpses.

Table 1: Assessing the Potential Suitability of a Development Site for Bats (Taken from Collins, 2023)

Suitability	Description of roosting habitats	Description of commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features onsite likely to be used for roosting bats.	Negligible habitat features onsite likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
Low	<p>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).</p> <p>A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.</p>	<p>Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.</p> <p>Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a long tree (not in a parkland situation) or patch of scrub.</p>
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	<p>Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.</p> <p>Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland, or water.</p>
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	<p>Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.</p> <p>High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.</p> <p>Site is close to and connected to known roosts.</p>

## DNA Analysis

- 2.6 No droppings were present to be collected and sent for analysis.

## Limitations

- 2.7 No limitations were present to prevent full access to all areas required for the survey.

## Legislation

- 2.8 Bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. In summary, this makes it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by bats for breeding and shelter, disturb a bat, or kill, injure, or take a bat. Seven bat species including noctule *Nyctalus noctula* (but not common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) are listed at Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- 2.9 The ODPM Circular 06/05 makes the presence of a protected species a material consideration within the planning process. It states that it is essential for the presence of protected species and the extent they may be affected by proposed development be established through appropriate surveys before the planning permission is granted and encourages the use of planning conditions to secure the long-term protection of the species.
- 2.10 The NERC Act, as amended, puts an obligation on public bodies to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Under the terms of the Act, conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing populations and/or habitats. The local planning authority (LPA) or other determining authority must therefore consider the effects of planning applications upon biodiversity and how it can be mitigated for or enhances.
- 2.11 Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required that 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment' and that 'opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.'

### 3. RESULTS – WALKOVER SURVEY

#### Site Description

- 3.1 The site is a residential property with attached garage that has a proposal to change the flat garage roof to pitch to allow a storage area above and also to convert the utility room to the rear to either a kitchen or dining room.
- 3.2 The immediate surrounding landscape comprises further residential properties and farmland.

*Figure 1: Brandle How building, with location of works highlighted in red.*



### Desk Study

- 3.3 No (0) bat EPSM records were found within 2km of the proposed development.

### Preliminary Roost Assessment

#### *Building Description*

- 3.6 The main building comprises of a detached, two-storey house. The area of proposed works is a single-storey attached garage to the north of the building.
- 3.7 The walls are rendered externally, and internally show walls constructed of brick.
- 3.8 The roof is flat and has a felt covering and is boarded internally with plasterboard. There are gaps along the tops of the walls where they join the roof. A wasp's nest is present on the northern side.
- 3.9 No bat droppings or other signs of bats were found.
- 3.10 Select photos of the buildings and features are provided in Appendix 1.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Following the inspection survey, it can be concluded that the area of proposed works has **negligible potential** for bats. No bat droppings were found or any other evidence in or around the site including staining.
- 4.2 The habitats surrounding the building is highly suited to bats, providing woodland, waterways and grassland areas, where bats might commute, feed and/or roost.

### Potential Impacts

- 4.3 The building is classified as having **negligible potential** and the reroofing and internal refurb does not have the potential to disturb bats or destroy potential roosts.
- 4.4 Following the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines, no further surveys are required.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Final recommendations are as follow:

- Permanent external lighting should be kept to a minimum and, where necessary, should be low wattage and should include measures to reduce reflective rebound into the surrounding sky, to avoid impacting commuting and foraging bats.
- Site lighting will be kept to a minimum during construction and operational phases. If lighting is necessary, there are a number of ways to minimise the effect of lighting on bats. Information can be taken from the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (2018). If further clarification is required, the ecologist should be consulted.

## 6. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

COLLINS, J. (ED.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London <https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/bat-surveys-for-professional-ecologists-good-practice-guidelines-3rd-edition>

Bat Ability (2019) Assessing Sites for Hibernation Potential. A Practical Approach, including Proposed Method and Supporting Notes

Bat Conservation Trust (2018) Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004), Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature, Peterborough

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para. 99

Grid Reference Finder (2023): GRF, online <http://www.gridreferencefinder.com>, accessed at report date.

Magic (2023): Magic Maps, NEPS licences and designated sites, online <http://www.magic.gov.uk>, accessed at report date.

## 7. APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Photographs



Photograph 1: Front aspect of garage



Photograph 2: North aspect of garage



Photograph 1: Gap between wall and roof of garage



Photograph 2: Internal photograph showing brick walls and lined ceiling