

**Survey for Bats, Barn Owls & Breeding Birds,
The Coach House, The Cross, Sneckyeat Road, Whitehaven,
Cumbria, CA28 8JQ.**



The coach house viewed from the north with bat potential --○ & bat box ○

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**Report commissioned by: Richard Lindsay on behalf of
Mrs J Bailly**

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Introduction

This report has been produced to identify any protected species of animal in particular, bat, barn owl or any nesting bird from being disturbed in their roost, nest or feeding areas during the proposed work to be carried out on the property.

A1 Bats and their requirements

All British bats and their roosts are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive as in need of protection. NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) acts as a guide to local authorities in relation to wildlife issues where developments may affect protected species and how conservation and any appropriate mitigation measures should be implemented. Furthermore where the presence of a European protected species (all British bats) may be affected by development then a licence to derogate from the habitats directive 2014 Regulations would be required from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Licences are processed by Natural England, the statutory body for nature conservation.

A bat roost may be defined in several ways:

- A) Summer breeding roost
- B) Hibernation roost.
- C) Transitional or temporary roost.

As bats have a variety of roost sites that fulfil different requirements at different times of the year, and these sites are returned to regularly, then the roost is protected even if the bats are not present. 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 Bat Year, indicated below, shows work on trees and roofs is best done in spring or autumn (red) while work on roosting sites are best avoided from June-August and hibernation sites from December- February, this avoids periods when they are particularly vulnerable to disturbance.

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| January, February | Bats Hibernate, Individually or in small groups. |
| March, April, May | Occasionally wake. Bats hungry and active, torpid in bad weather. Move roost sites |
| June, July, August | Females in large maternity groups. Young born, suckle for 6 weeks. Mothers leave roost first, young later. |
| September, October, November | Mating takes place. Bats put on fat. Look for good wintering sites. Gradually become torpid for longer periods. |
| December | Hibernate |

Table from the Bat Conservation Trust

A2 Barn Owls and their requirements

Barn Owls are listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). Should barn owls be present in the barn then a licence would be required from Defra and licenced by Natural England to derogate from the Act, and mitigation for the disturbance would be required. NPPF acts as a guide to local authorities in relation to wildlife issues where developments may affect protected species, the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a local planning authority is considering a development proposal which if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.

A3 Breeding Birds

All wild birds, their nests, eggs and young are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1961 (as amended) during the nesting season. Work must not begin if nesting birds are present on site and should occur outside of the bird nesting season (March through to August, although weather dependant). If building works are undertaken during the bird breeding season, a check for any active nest sites should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. If breeding birds are found during the survey, the nest should not be disturbed and works should be delayed until nesting is complete and any young birds have fledged.

B1 Background to activity

An application to Planning is being made to convert the coach house to a dwelling a bat and breeding birds survey is being commissioned for the application.

Survey and site assessment

C1 Pre-existing information on species at the site

None.

C2 Status of species in the local/regional area

| Species | Local Status | Habitat |
|---|---|--|
| Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i> | Widespread but uncommon, mobile populations, breeding roosts recorded. | Tree dweller; predominantly in lowlands. Occupies woodpecker & rot holes. Seldom in buildings. Will utilise bat boxes. Feeds over deciduous woodland, parkland, pasture, water & forest edges. |
| Daubenton's bat <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> | Widespread; hibernacula & breeding roosts recorded | Bridges, tunnels, caves, mines, stone buildings & trees. Has been found hibernating underground at high altitude (550m). Feeds over rivers, canals & other water bodies. Will forage in riparian woodland. |
| Natterer's bat <i>Myotis nattereri</i> | Widespread; hibernacula & breeding roosts recorded. Less common than Daubenton's. | Similar to Daubenton's & can be found together; bridges, old buildings, barns, trees & underground sites. Feeds in woodland & parkland. Has recently been recorded in some upland areas, mainly using riparian habitats. |
| Whiskered bat <i>Myotis mystacinus</i> | Widespread but uncommon; breeding roosts & hibernacula recorded | Older, mainly stone buildings, old churches, trees & often in bat boxes. Feeds mainly in deciduous woodland. |
| Brandt's bat <i>Myotis brandtii</i> | Widespread but uncommon; breeding roosts & hibernacula recorded. 'Swarming' sites recorded. | Similar to Whiskered. |
| Brown Long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i> | Widespread; hibernacula & breeding roosts recorded | Old buildings, churches, barns (often with trees close by), underground sites & trees. Often found in bat boxes. Feeds in deciduous & coniferous woodland often within the canopy, around parkland trees, gardens, along hedgerows |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Common Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> (45kHz) | Widespread & common; breeding roosts recorded but species recognition only recently recorded. | Wide age range of buildings; favours modern structures, trees occasionally & bat boxes. Feeds over diverse habitat; rural & urban gardens, woodland, farmland or near water. Found hibernating behind wooden cladding on buildings, in soffits, behind fascia boarding & in gaps in wooden window frames, also hibernates in |
| Soprano Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> (55kHz) | Widespread and common; breeding roosts recorded but species recognition only recently recorded | As Common Pipistrelle. Favours riparian habitat & roosts in larger maternity colonies than the Common Pipistrelle. Found hibernating behind wooden cladding on buildings, in soffits, behind fascia boarding & in gaps in wooden window frames, also hibernates in |
| Nathusius Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i> | Rare. Three UK breeding sites known. A single bat detector record of a night roost in Cumbria and several foraging records. | Tree dweller, hollow trees, cracks, bat boxes & buildings. Sometimes shares nursery roost with Pipistrelle or Brandt's bats. Feeds mainly around riparian & woodland edge habitats. |
| Leisler's bat <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i> | Rare. Unconfirmed bat detector record in Cumbria. Present in adjacent counties (Yorkshire & Dumfries & Galloway) | Woodland bat, similar to Noctule but will roost in buildings. Feeds in open deciduous and coniferous woodland, over water bodies, parkland and around street lamps in suburban areas. |
| Alcathoe's bat <i>Myotis alcathoe</i> | Rare. Unconfirmed bat detector record for Cumbria. Present in adjacent county (Yorkshire) | Woodland bat, similar to Whiskered. Feeds in mature deciduous woodland with streams. Often uses dead/decaying trees for roosting. |

(adapted from the Cumbrian Wildlife Trust BAP report)

The Cumbrian Mammals atlas compiled by Tullie House Museum which records reported sightings of bats (the majority being from populated areas) there are no reports of bats in this Tetrad NX9816 (4km square) with Brown Long Eared & Pipistrelle bats in adjoining tetrads and with Daubenton, Noctule & Whiskered bats within 6km. A survey 1km to the southeast in 2015 found Common & Soprano Pipistrelle bats. Tyto alba (barn owl) is considered widespread but scarce. The Breeding Birds for Cumbria Atlas 2007-2012, indicates the species breeding in this Tetrad NX9816 and is in 6 of the 8 surrounding tetrads.

C3 Objective of Survey

The objective of survey was to ascertain whether there were any signs of use of the site by bats, barn owls and other breeding birds.

Signs of bats include droppings, insect remains, wear marks on beams, egress points smoothed by continuous use, or the presence of bats. Areas that have potential for bats to roost in, but no actual signs of bats or inaccessible areas to survey are also noted.

Signs of owls include :- pellets, faeces remains ('whitewash'), feathers, dead chicks, prey remains or the presence of owls.

Signs of breeding birds :- bird activity, nest material and eggs/chicks, feathers and faeces.

C4 Survey area

The survey area was the building internally & externally, surrounding buildings were also observed.

C5 Habitat description The Coach House is at grid ref. NX993160 to the east of The Cross Guest house to the southeast of Hensingham and the Athletic Stadium. Pow beck is 400m to the south it flows 6km southwest into the Irish Sea at St Bees it is mainly tree lined. Boundaries are stone walls or fences and hedges and large trees and shrubs. Longlands Lake on the River Ehan and Clints Quarry a Cumbria Wildlife site are 4km to the south east.

Site description The two storey former coach house is to the east of The Cross with the former walled garden to the east, its walls are local stone & brick mortar built & rendered with external access steps, roof is slate with stone ridge on battens, rafters, purlin & truss, upper floor is boards on joists, ground floor is concrete.

C6 Field survey

C6.1 Methods:

The building was surveyed on 8th October 2022. Areas that had potential for bats, owls or other birds but were inaccessible were noted.

C6.2 Timing-

the emergence/activity survey was carried on the same evening, although late in the bat year sufficient activity was observed for a valid survey.

C6.3 Weather conditions- temperature was 13degC conditions were dry with 100-50% cloud cover and calm, sunset was approx. 18:17.

C6.4 Personnel- survey was conducted by Steve Wake, Lesley Grey using a Magenta Bat5 & Duet & Echo meter Touch 2 detector.

C7 Results:-

There was no sign of any barn owl, bird or bat activity within the building.

Bat flight height is 2-4m unless stated

18:02 Survey commenced.

18:16 a Noctule bat (NO) was heard foraging to the E.

18:38 a NO foraged SW from G to S of CH at 8m height.

18:43 a Common Pipistrelle (CP) foraged N over G at 6m height.

18:44 a CP foraged W to the N of G at 8m height.

18:46 a CP foraged NW then E & S over G at 8m height.

18:47 a CP foraged S over G at 6-8m height.

18:48 a CP foraged E & back to S of CH, also at 19:02, 05, 11 to 14, & a Soprano Pipistrelle (SP) at 18:51.

18:50 a CP commuted SE from H over CH at 8m height, also at 19:23.

18:52 a SP commuted N up W lane, with a CP returning at 19:15.

18:53 a SP commuted E from H over G at 6m height.

18:56 a CP foraged W & back along S lane, also at 19:26.

18:58 a CP foraged around CH making several circuits.

18:58 & 59 a CP foraged S & SW from G at 6m height.

19:01 a CP was heard foraging in trees to the NE, also to the N at 19:30.

19:07 a CP foraged around CH heading S.

19:08 a CP was heard foraging over G, also at 19:09,10 & 31.

19:26 a CP was heard foraging to the S of H.

19:32 survey ended.

CAPITALS refer to bat type, compass direction & location. The interior of the coach house was monitored during the survey with no activity inside.

Potential

There is potential for bats to roost in areas difficult to access, such as :-

Under the ridge stones, slates & flashings..

Behind roof timbers, boarded areas & dense ivy.

In openings in external walls & around door & window frames

There is opportunity for Owl & bird roosting but none seen.

C8 Interpretation and evaluation

C8.1 Presence/Absence:

There were no field signs to indicate the presence of barn owls, other birds or bat roosting, there is potential for bats to roost in other areas indicated.

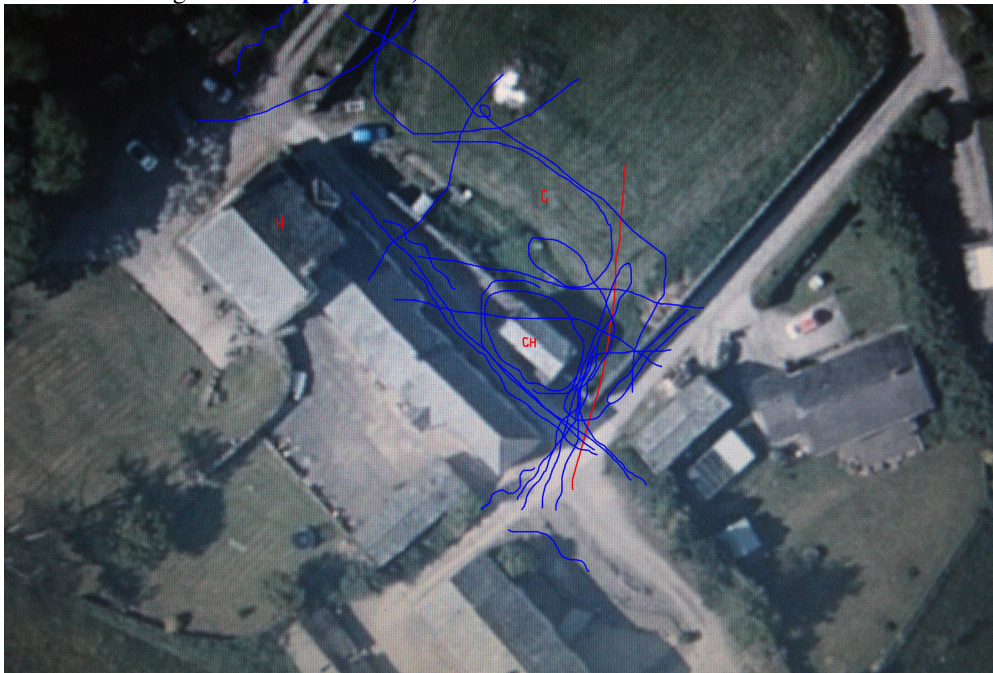
C8.2 Population size class assessment: Potential solitary transient bat roosting.

C8.3 Site status assessment:

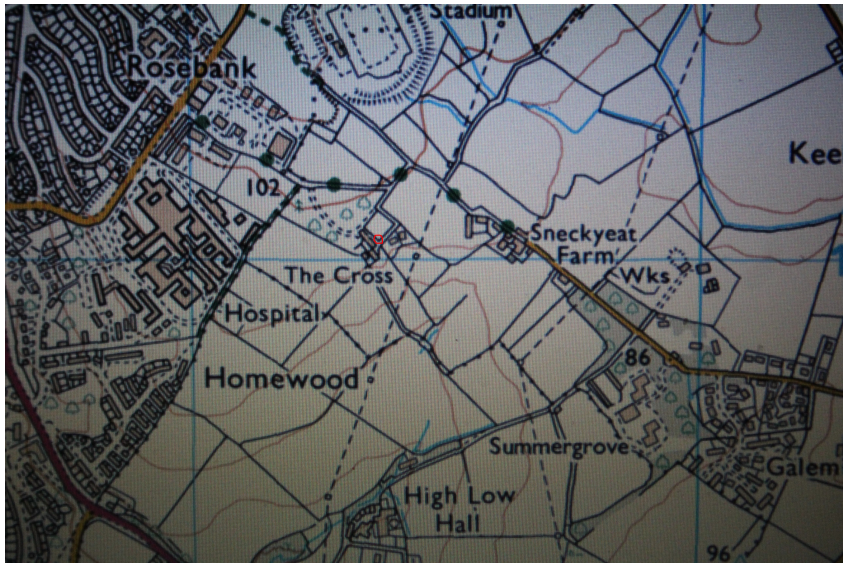
In their present condition, the site has a low status in the ecology of the local owl and other bird and a medium status for bat populations.

C9 Map of survey area CH Coach House, H House, G Garden

Site Plan Bat flight area .Pipistrelle--, Noctule --



Site Location **O**



Impact assessment

D1 Pre- and mid- activity impacts:

None for Barn Owls and other birds, slight for bats.

D2 Long-term impacts: none.

D3 Post activity interference impacts: none

D4 Other impacts: External lighting to low level and output to protect feeding areas.

D5 Summary of impacts at the site level: None, if there are no bats or nesting birds present at the time of works.

D6 Summary of impacts in a wider context: none.

Mitigation

E1 Mitigation strategy: None required for Barn Owls, smaller birds or bats.

E2 Replacement roost site selection: None required, a bat box placed on the house northeast wall to re-house any bats found.

E2.1 Existing species status: Common & Soprano Pipistrelle bats are common and widespread, Barn Owls and Noctule bats are less common but widespread.

E2.2 Location, ownership and status: The Coach House is at grid ref. NX993160 to the east of The Cross Guest house to the southeast of Hensingham and the Athletic Stadium, Pow beck is 400m to the south it flows 6km southwest into the Irish Sea at St Bees it is mainly tree lined. The property is owned by Mrs J Bailly.

E3 Habitat creation, restoration and/or enhancement:

Bat roosts can be created by:-

Erecting bat boxes with one on the house used to re-locate any bats found during the work.

Habitat can be enhanced by encouraging insect life and:

Planting and maintaining broad-leafed native tree species.

Planting night-flowering species such as honeysuckle.

Planting native flowering species such as dog rose.

External lighting to be ideally low level and output so as not to disturb bat feeding areas.

E3.1 Terrestrial habitats: Rural house & garden.

E4 Capture and exclusion. N/A.

E4.1 Timing , effort, methods, capture/exclusion methods: See Bat Year.

E5 Post development safeguard. None.

E5.1 Habitat management and safeguard: the site is located in a rural agricultural landscape with no immediate threat to the surrounding habitat.

E5.2 Population monitoring: N/A.

E5.3 Mechanism for ensuring delivery: work to be carried out in 2023/24, any sign of bat activity in the building during works should be notified immediately!

F1 Summary of development and mitigation:

The building had no internal field signs of barn owls other birds or bats, bat activity was observed around the property

There is potential for bats to be present in the areas that were inaccessible to the survey. These were, under any gaps ridge tiles and roof junctions and under slates, behind roof timbers in wall gaps and within main house roof. Extreme care must be taken when carrying out any demolition or roofing especially in these areas. Crevices should be checked with a torch prior to demolition to ensure no bats are killed, a bat worker can install none return any areas of great concern.



Interior roof of coach house looking north

