

**Survey for Bats, Barn Owls & Breeding Birds,  
Grove Court Hotel, Cleator, Cumbria, CA23 3DT.**



Hotel viewed from the southeast

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**Report commissioned by: Mike Dawson of Day Cummins,  
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# Contents

## Introduction

|    |                             |             |   |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------|---|
| A1 | Bats and their requirements | , Bat Year. | 3 |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------|---|

|    |                                  |   |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| A2 | Barn owls and their requirements | 4 |
|----|----------------------------------|---|

|    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| A3 | Breeding birds | 4 |
|----|----------------|---|

|    |                        |   |
|----|------------------------|---|
| B1 | Background to activity | 4 |
|----|------------------------|---|

## Survey and site assessment

|    |                                             |   |
|----|---------------------------------------------|---|
| C1 | Pre-existing information on species on site | 4 |
|----|---------------------------------------------|---|

|    |                                              |     |
|----|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| C2 | Status of species in the local/regional area | 4-5 |
|----|----------------------------------------------|-----|

|    |                  |   |
|----|------------------|---|
| C3 | Object of survey | 5 |
|----|------------------|---|

|    |             |   |
|----|-------------|---|
| C4 | Survey area | 5 |
|----|-------------|---|

|    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| C5 | Habitat description | 6 |
|----|---------------------|---|

|    |               |   |
|----|---------------|---|
| C6 | Field survey: | 6 |
|----|---------------|---|

|      |         |   |
|------|---------|---|
| C6.1 | Methods | 6 |
|------|---------|---|

|      |        |   |
|------|--------|---|
| C6.2 | Timing | 6 |
|------|--------|---|

|      |                    |   |
|------|--------------------|---|
| C6.3 | Weather Conditions | 6 |
|------|--------------------|---|

|      |           |   |
|------|-----------|---|
| C6.4 | Personnel | 6 |
|------|-----------|---|

|    |         |   |
|----|---------|---|
| C7 | Results | 6 |
|----|---------|---|

|    |                               |   |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
| C8 | Interpretation and evaluation | 7 |
|----|-------------------------------|---|

|      |                  |   |
|------|------------------|---|
| C8.1 | Presence/Absence | 7 |
|------|------------------|---|

|      |                                  |   |
|------|----------------------------------|---|
| C8.2 | Population size class assessment | 7 |
|------|----------------------------------|---|

|      |                        |   |
|------|------------------------|---|
| C8.3 | Site status assessment | 7 |
|------|------------------------|---|

|    |                    |   |
|----|--------------------|---|
| C9 | Map of survey area | 7 |
|----|--------------------|---|

## Impact assessment

|    |                               |   |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
| D1 | Pre-and mid- activity impacts | 8 |
|----|-------------------------------|---|

|    |                   |   |
|----|-------------------|---|
| D2 | Long-term impacts | 8 |
|----|-------------------|---|

|    |                                    |   |
|----|------------------------------------|---|
| D3 | Post activity interference impacts | 8 |
|----|------------------------------------|---|

|    |               |   |
|----|---------------|---|
| D4 | Other impacts | 8 |
|----|---------------|---|

|    |                                      |   |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|
| D5 | Summary of the impacts at site level | 8 |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|

|    |                                       |   |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| D6 | Summary of impacts in a wider context | 8 |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|

## Mitigation

|    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| E1 | Mitigation strategy | 8 |
|----|---------------------|---|

|    |                                  |   |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| E2 | Replacement roost site selection | 8 |
|----|----------------------------------|---|

|      |                         |   |
|------|-------------------------|---|
| E2.1 | Existing species status | 8 |
|------|-------------------------|---|

|      |                                |   |
|------|--------------------------------|---|
| E2.2 | Location, ownership and status | 8 |
|------|--------------------------------|---|

|    |                                                  |   |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|---|
| E3 | Habitat creation, restoration and/or enhancement | 8 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|---|

|    |                       |   |
|----|-----------------------|---|
| E4 | Capture and exclusion | 8 |
|----|-----------------------|---|

|      |                                                    |   |
|------|----------------------------------------------------|---|
| E4.1 | Timing, effort, methods, capture/exclusion methods | 8 |
|------|----------------------------------------------------|---|

|    |                            |   |
|----|----------------------------|---|
| E5 | Post development safeguard | 8 |
|----|----------------------------|---|

|      |                                  |   |
|------|----------------------------------|---|
| E5.1 | Habitat management and safeguard | 8 |
|------|----------------------------------|---|

|      |                       |   |
|------|-----------------------|---|
| E5.2 | Population monitoring | 8 |
|------|-----------------------|---|

## Summary

|    |                                                |     |
|----|------------------------------------------------|-----|
| F1 | Summary of development, mitigation, References | 8-9 |
|----|------------------------------------------------|-----|

|  |          |      |
|--|----------|------|
|  | Photo's. | 9-11 |
|--|----------|------|

## 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.<br>Bats hungry and active, torpid in bad weather.<br>Move roost sites                                 |
| June, July, August           | Females in large maternity groups.<br>Young born, suckle for 6 weeks.<br>Mothers leave roost first, young later.         |
| September, October, November | Mating takes place.<br>Bats put on fat.<br>Look for good wintering sites.<br>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 demolish the hotel retaining the east extension, 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Noctule</b> <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.                                     |
| <b>Daubenton's bat</b> <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.                         |
| <b>Natterer's bat</b> <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.           |
| <b>Whiskered bat</b> <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.                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Brandt's bat</b> <i>Myotis brandtii</i>          | Widespread but uncommon; breeding roosts & hibernacula recorded. 'Swarming' sites recorded. | Similar to Whiskered.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Brown Long-eared bat</b> <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 |

|                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Common Pipistrelle</b><br><i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i><br>(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 |
| <b>Soprano Pipistrelle</b><br><i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i><br>(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                                                           |
| <b>Nathusius Pipistrelle</b><br><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.                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Leisler's bat</b><br><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.                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Alcathoe's bat</b><br><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 NY0114 (4km square) with Daubenton, Noctule, Pipistrelle & Whiskered bats in adjoining tetrads and with Brown Long Eared and Natterers bats within 6km. A survey 200m to the southeast in 2017 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 is not breeding in this Tetrad NY0114 but they are in half of the 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 hotel externally, surrounding habitat was also observed.

## **C5 Habitat description**

The Grove Court Hotel is at grid ref. NY019141, between Cleator and Cleator Moor on the north side of the A5086, the River Ehan is 100m to the southeast it flows 10km southwest into the Irish Sea at Sellafield, it is mainly tree lined. Boundaries are dry 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 1.5km to the south east.

### **Site description**

The single storey former school is between Cross Grove Road and St Marys Church, its walls are local stone mortar built, the extension is rendered blockwork, roof is slate with stone ridge on battens, rafters, purlin & truss & felt with eaves soffit, fascia & barge boards.

## **C6 Field survey**

### **C6.1 Methods:**

The building was surveyed in August 2020 by UES Ecologists on a scoping survey. 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 evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

UES Ecologists suggested two activity surveys may be needed but sufficient numbers of bats and their roost points were noted in one survey as not to require the second survey.

### **C6.3 Weather conditions-**

temperature was 12degC conditions were occasional light showers with 90% cloud cover and a light southwest breeze, sunset was approx. 21:10.

### **C6.4 Personnel-** survey was conducted by Steve Wake, Lesley Grey & Jude Hartley using a Magenta Bat5 & Duet detectors and a Echo Touch 2 meter.

## **C7 Results:-**

There was no sign of any barn owls, signs of bats were noted by UES Ecologists on their scoping survey in 2020. There were no signs of nesting birds but roosting signs were seen under the roof eaves.

Bat flight height is 2-3m unless stated

20:55 Survey commenced.

21:25 a Pipistrelle (P) emerged from extension south roof verge & flew E to large trees in cemetery at 5m height.

21:30 a Common Pipistrelle (CP) commuted SW over the buildings at 8m height & returned at 21:33.

21:35 a CP commuted S then SW over S grass area at 6m height.

21:38 a CP foraged S over the buildings at 7m height.

21:39 a CP was heard foraging to the N of the hotel.

21:40 to 43 a CP light sampled between corner of hotel (where droppings seen) and the extension heading SE and foraging around conservatory at 21:46

21:47 to 22:03 a CP foraged over E grass area extending flight S to either side of Sycamore tree, recommenced at 22:06 to 22:10.

21:48 a P commuted SE to W of hotel.

22:07 a CP was heard foraging to the NW of the hotel.

22:12 a CP was heard foraging in the cemetery to the E.

22:14 a CP was heard foraging to the SE.

22:17 a CP foraged in the trees to the S of Cross Grove.

22:25 survey ended.

CAPITALS refer to bat type and compass directions.

### **Potential**

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

Under the ridge tiles, slates & flashings..

Behind roof timbers, soffit, fascia & boarded areas.

In openings in external walls & around door & window frames

There is no opportunity for Owls to roost, bird roosting signs were observed under the eaves.

## C8 Interpretation and evaluation

### C8.1 Presence/Absence:

There were no field signs to indicate the presence of barn owls, there were signs of birds roosting on wires under the north eaves, there were indications of two single bats roosting under the hotel corner eaves and the extensions south roof verge with light sampling over the sheltered lawn and commuting flight between the large trees to the NE & SE of the site, there is potential for bats to roost in other areas indicated.

**C8.2 Population size class assessment:** Common Pipistrelle bats were seen in small numbers.

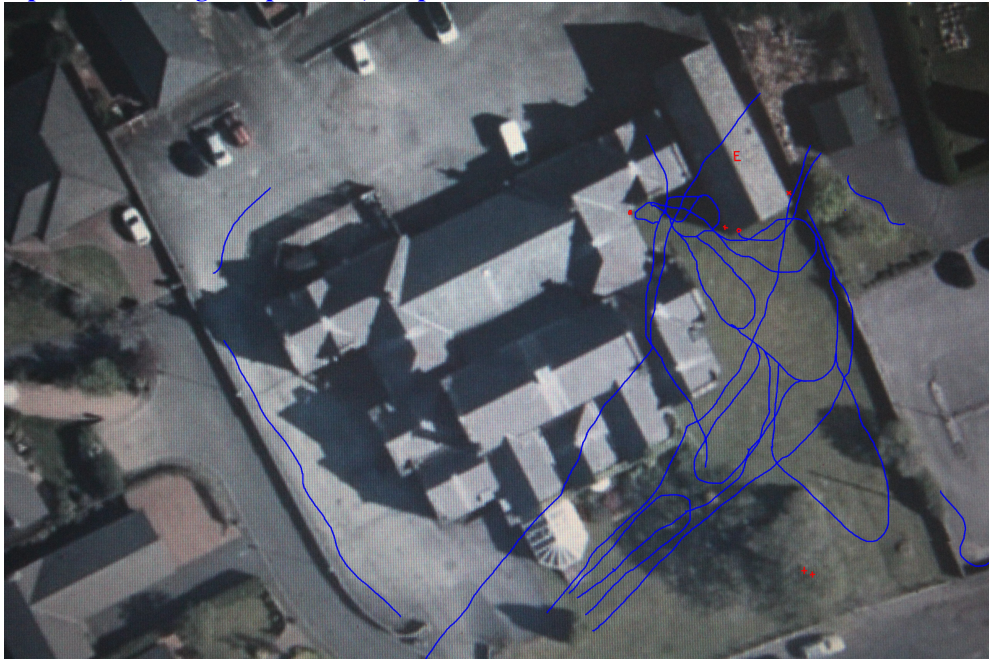
### C8.3 Site status assessment:

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

Site Plan Bat flight area **E** Extension

**Pipistrelle, Emergence points O, Proposed new bat roosts X.**



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: Planned external lighting to low level and output to protect foraging and commuting 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 or smaller birds, roost areas to be provided for bats.

### E2 Replacement roost site selection: Bat roosts to be provided in the fascia of the extension and roost boxes to be placed on Sycamore in the grounds to the south, these can be used to re-house any bats found during the demolition.

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

#### E2.2 Location, ownership and status: The Grove Court Hotel is at grid ref. NY019141, between Cleator and Cleator Moor on the north side of the A5086, the River Ehan is 100m to the southeast it flows 10km southwest into the Irish Sea at Sellafield and mainly tree lined. The property is owned by Mr C Benn.

### E3 Habitat creation, restoration and/or enhancement:

Bat roosts can be created by:-

- Erecting two bat boxes on the Sycamore tree, 4m above the ground.

- Forming two roost boxes in fascia of extension (Natural England detail 7)

Habitat can be enhanced by encouraging insect life in the new development by:

- Planting and maintaining broad-leaved native tree species.

- Planting night-flowering species such as honeysuckle.

- Planting native flowering species such as dog rose.

- Forming a pond or bog garden.

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

#### E3.1 Terrestrial habitats: Adjoining housing estate and cemetery.

#### 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 semi-rural urban 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 2022/23, any sign of bat activity in the building during works should be notified immediately!

### F1 Summary of development and mitigation:

The building had no field signs of barn owls, other birds were observed with roosting under the roof eaves and bat activity was observed around the property with two single Pipistrelle roosts.

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. Extreme care must be taken when carrying out the demolition especially in these areas.

Crevices should be checked with a torch prior to demolition by hand to ensure no bats are killed, a bat worker can install none return valves to any areas of great concern and will transfer any bats found to new roost areas.

Two bat boxes will be provided on the Sycamore tree at 4m height and two fascia box roosts on the retained extension two months prior to the start of any work and timed as advised on Bat Year.

**If at any point during the works bats are seen or suspected within the building, work must stop and further advice sought!**

Provided work is carried out in accordance with this report then a European Protected Species Bat Licence should not be required.

## References

Bat Conservation Trust. Bats and the Law BCT & RSPB joint publication.

Bat Conservation Trust 2007 Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guide.

Virtual Fauna of Lakeland. Tullie House Museum.

Natural England. Nature on the Map.

The Breeding Birds of Cumbria. A tetrad atlas 2007-2012.

Birds and Wildlife of Cumbria. Annual Reports.

Wildlife Trust for Cumbria. Biodiversity Action Plan.

Woodland Management for Bats. Forestry Commission England

Mitchell-Jones, A J & McLeish. 2004 Bat Workers Manual

## Photographs

Hotel viewed from the west



Hotel & extension viewed from the southeast with bat emergence points ---



Corner eaves of hotel with access gap where Pipistrelle roosts



Hotel viewed from the southwest



Hotel viewed from the north with boys entrance to former school



Interior of extension roof



Extension viewed from the northwest showing the eaves soffit & fascia for two new bat roosts

