

Outbuilding Located at Newton Manor

Gosforth

Cumbria

Bat Survey Report

AVISON YOUNG

VERSION 2

Final

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1. Introduction

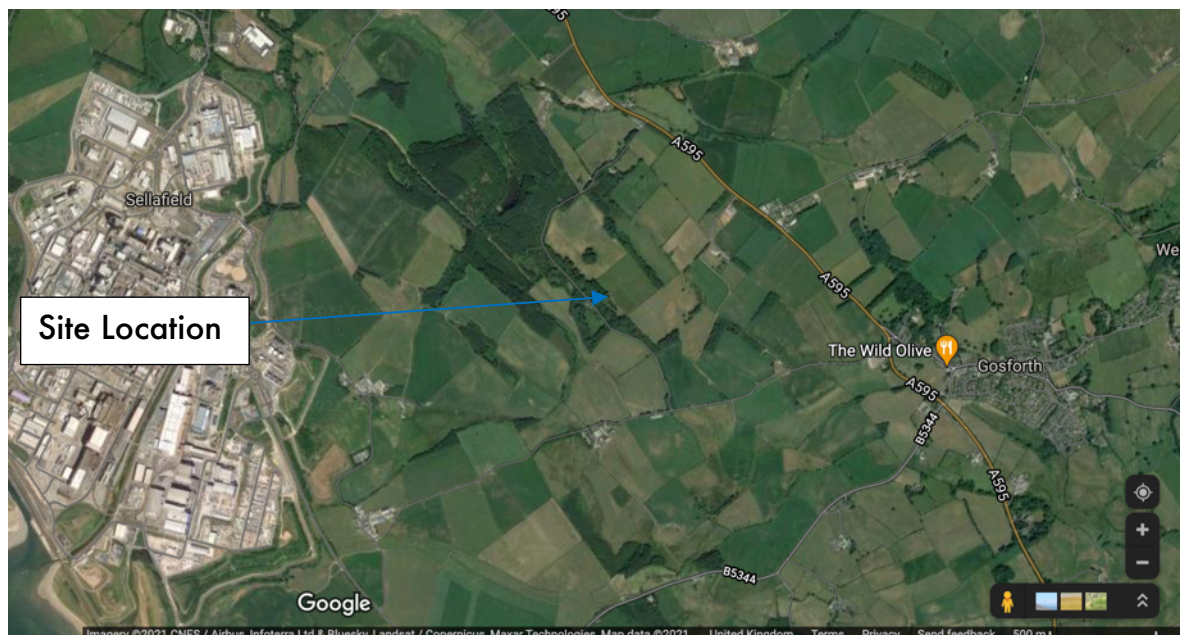
BiOME Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Avison Young in August 2021 to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) survey of a small derelict building located at the site of Newton Manor (**Figure 1**). The site is centred on National Grid Reference SO 35213 78521.

The site has been subject to considerable survey/assessment^{1,2} in the past to inform the demolition of Newton Manor.

1.1. Site Description

The site included a small (c.4m x4m) shed in the grounds at the location of Newton Manor, which was demolished in 2020. The shed has become heavily vegetated/overgrown with Ivy *Hedera helix*.

Figure 1. Site location



¹ REC (2016). *Bat Survey Report, Newton Manor, Seascale, Cumbria*

² REC (2016). *Bat inspection Survey Report, Newton Manor, Seascale, Cumbria*

1.2. Development Proposal

The outbuilding is to be demolished.

2. Legislative Background

All British bat species are fully protected at national and European levels, through their inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)³ and in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010⁴. Under this legislation, it is an offence to deliberately kill, injure or take a bat as well as intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or resting place used for shelter or protection by a bat or disturb an animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Four species of bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Lesser Horseshoe Bat *R. hipposideros*, Bechstein's Bat *Myotis bechsteinii* and Western Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, are included on Annex II of the Habitats Directive⁵, which requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation to ensure the maintenance of favourable conservation status (and these are therefore generally considered as perhaps the most important UK species). Seven bat species are listed as Section 41⁶ priority species; Barbastelle, Bechstein's Bat, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus*, Greater Horseshoe Bat and Lesser Horseshoe Bat.

3 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

4 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

5 Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

6 Of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

3. Methodologies

3.1. Preliminary Roost Assessment

A PRA survey was completed on 6 September 2021 by Martyn Owen in line with appropriate survey guidance⁷.

Martyn is an experienced and qualified ecologist, and full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Martyn holds a Natural England licence to survey bats (2015-1974-CLS-CLS) which derogates the law with regard to disturbance of these species.

The survey involved a systematic search of the exterior and interior of the building to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting sites, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and/or squeaking noises. It should be noted that sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (and even when they do wet weather can wash away evidence).

The external inspection also included the examination of the ground, particularly beneath any potential bat access points, for example any windowsills, window panes, walls, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascias, lead flashing, gaps under felt, and under tiles/slates.

The inspection of buildings and built structures for evidence of bats, which can be conducted at all times of year was facilitated by the use of a ladder, a high-powered torch, endoscope and small dental mirrors to inspect accessible crevices considered likely to support bats. Weather conditions on the day of the survey were appropriate for undertaking ecological fieldwork (sunny and dry).

The potential suitability of the buildings for roosting bats was assessed in line with relevant guidelines⁷ and allocated to one of the categories detailed within **Table 1**.

⁷ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edn.). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

Table 1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure/tree 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).
Moderate	A structure/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).
High	A structure/tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by 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.
Confirmed Roost	Roosting bat/s or definitive evidence of roosting bats (i.e. accumulations of droppings) present.

The site was also checked for evidence of nesting birds including nests, pellets, feathers, droppings, and live and/or dead specimens, as well as the potential for protected/controlled species.

3.2. Limitations

The findings presented in this study represent those at the time of survey and reporting, and data collected from available sources. Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals, such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour.

4. Results

The outbuilding was densely clad with (predominantly) Ivy, rendering it almost impenetrable (**Photograph 1**).

The interior of the building stored old gardening/maintenance items and was fully inspected. The roof was lined with wood, above which a slate roof could be seen. However, this roof was entirely overgrown with Ivy (**Photograph 2**) and consequently there was no potential roost sites beneath tiles.

Two broken windows (covered with vegetation) were present, along with a door.

No evidence of bat usage was present and bat access was not possible due to the density of vegetation.

The outbuilding was therefore assessed to be of **NEGLIGABLE** suitability for roosting bats (**Table 1**).

Photograph 1. Exterior of outbuilding



Photograph 2. **Roof exterior**



4.1. Other Species

A very old bird nest was present within the building, and it is considered likely that birds nest within vegetation on the exterior.

5. Conclusions and Required Actions

5.1. General Mitigation

Standard pollution control measures should be implemented during demolition to protect habitats on/adjacent to the site.

5.2. Bats

The outbuilding was assessed to be of negligible potential value to roosting bats and no further survey work is required. In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during works, all works must cease and the advice of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) sought.

Habitats with the potential to support foraging and/or commuting bats around the site periphery were present. To minimise impacts to bats during construction, works during the period between 15 minutes before sunset and 15 minutes after sunrise should be avoided/minimised so far as practicably possible. If temporary lighting is necessary, it should be directed to where it is needed, and light spillage avoided.

5.3. Nesting Birds

The active nests of wild bird species (with certain exceptions) are legally protected from deliberate disturbance or destruction. Therefore, if works are proposed for the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive), it will be necessary to appoint a SQE to complete a check for active birds' nests. Should any active nests be found then it would be necessary to delay works until the nesting attempt has reached a natural conclusion. If works are planned for outside of the bird nesting period, then no such check is necessary.

5.4. Opportunities for Enhancement

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policies for the protection of biodiversity (and geological) conservation through the planning system. A key principle of NPPF is that, '*Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged*'. Taking the

requirements of NPPF into account, opportunities should be sought where possible for nature conservation enhancement at this site.

Opportunities also exist to enhance the site for bat and bird species through the incorporation of bat/bird boxes on trees. S41 priority species could potentially benefit from the provision of appropriate boxes. Such measures would therefore be beneficial to nature conservation and show compliance with the latest policy guidance.