

Ecology Report for:

The Beacon Public House
100-101 Greens Place
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE33 2AQ

Prepared for:

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.0.1 Dendra Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Gary Craig Building Services Ltd. to undertake an Extended Phase 1 Survey of land at The Beacon Public House, South Shields. The survey was requested in order to support a planning application for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of residential apartments on the site.
- 1.0.2 The site consists of an end-terrace, two-storey building, with timber decked patio to the rear. No other habitat types are present.
- 1.0.3 The desk study indicated the presence of several designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the proposed development site, including one Ramsar site, three Sites of Special Scientific Interest, six Local Wildlife Sites and one Site of Local Conservation Interest. These sites are geographically separated from the proposed development site, often by urban areas and therefore it is considered that the proposals will not affect any of these designated nature conservation sites.
- 1.0.4 Overall, the site has very little potential for biodiversity; only two habitat types (building and hard standing) were recorded on site, both of which are common and widespread and offer little opportunities for wildlife. As the site was formerly in use as a public house, it is expected that the proposals to develop the site for residential use will result in a reduction in light spillage, noise and general human disturbance. Therefore no significant post development impacts are predicted.
- 1.0.5 No controlled invasive species were noted on site.
- 1.0.6 The building itself was assessed for the potential to contain roosting bats, and was classified as being of very low risk. As such, no further survey work is recommended for this species. A precautionary working method is recommended and provided within this report.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background & Scope

2.1.1 Dendra Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Gary Craig Building Services Ltd. to undertake an Extended Phase 1 Survey of land at The Beacon Public House, South Shields. The survey was requested in order to support a planning application at the site, as per Section 2.2, below.

2.2 Details of Proposals

2.2.1 The proposals involve the demolition of the existing building to make way for the construction of residential apartments on the site.

2.3 Field Survey Methodology, Timing and Personnel

2.3.1 A site walkover survey was conducted on 16th September 2015 in accordance with the standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010). The walkover field survey was carried out both across the site and, where necessary, over surrounding land, in order to establish broad habitat types and features of ecological interest that would provide potential for, or display evidence of, protected species. On this occasion, given that the building and timber decking occupies the entirety of the surveyed site, and no species were found, a Phase 1 Habitat plan and species list have not been created.

2.3.2 The survey was undertaken by Frances Mudd and Liam Robson. Fran is an experienced ecologist and full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Weather conditions during the survey were dry and clear.

2.3.3 The building on site to be affected by the development was assessed in terms of its potential to support bat species, adhering to guidance issued by the Bat Conservation Trust (Hundt 2012).

2.3.4 During the site walkover survey, controlled invasive plant species listed under Schedule 9 (part ii) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were noted, if observed. Under this Act, it is an offence to cause the spread or relocation of species such as Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*.

2.4 Supporting Data

2.4.1 The Environmental Records Information Centre (ERIC) North East and Durham Bat Group were contacted for information regarding protected species and nature conservation sites within 2km of the proposed development site. Google Earth and the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website were accessed to study aerial imagery of the site and the surrounding area. An OS map was purchased and is attached as Figure 1.

3.0 SITE SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT

3.1 Site Location and Setting

3.1.1 The site is located towards the northern tip of South Shields. The approximate site centre grid reference is NZ365680. The approximate altitude is 16m AOD. The site itself comprises entirely of an end terrace, two storey public house, with a timber-decked patio to the south. To the west and east are residential properties. To the south of the site is a car park with residential dwellings beyond. Opposite the site is a narrow belt of semi-mature woodland. The River Tyne lies approximately 110m to the north. Figure 1 shows the site location and surrounding area.

Figure 1 – OS map of the site and surrounding area. Scale 1:25000



3.2 Protected Species Records

3.2.1 Consultation data received from ERIC NE revealed no protected or priority species records from the site itself, but does show a number of protected species within 2km of the development site. Consultation data from Durham Bat Group is pending. The closest records of each protected species are shown in Figure 2, below.

Figure 2 - Closest protected species records as provided by ERIC NE.

Species	Grid ref	Approx distance from site	Additional Comments
Purple Sandpiper	NZ 371 688	1km north east	-
Bats (Unknown species)	NZ 365 694	1.2km north	-
Bat - Myotis spp.	NZ 366 693	1.3km north	-
Bat - Whiskered/Brandt's	NZ 36 69	>1km north	-
Bat - Nathusius pipistrelle	NZ 36 69	>1km north	-
Bat - Common pipistrelle	NZ 36 69	>1km north	-
Bat - Soprano pipistrelle	NZ 35 69	>1.1km north west	-

3.2.2 In addition to those species above afforded legal protection, Figure 3 outlines those species recorded by ERIC NE within a 2km radius which are listed in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) and the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan.

Figure 3 – Records of NERC and local BAP priority species recorded within 2km search area

Species	NERC	Local BAP
Hedgehog	✓	✓
White-letter hairstreak	✓	✓
Small heath	✓	
Wall	✓	
42 moth species	✓	
Dark green fritillary		✓
House sparrow	✓	✓
Starling		✓
Song thrush		✓
Dunnock	✓	
Redshank		✓
Curlew	✓	✓

3.3 Statutory and Non-Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

3.3.1 There are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation sites within the site boundary. Those designated sites within 2km of the proposed development site are provided in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Designated wildlife sites within 2km.

Site	Status *	Approx distance from site and direction
River Tyne - tidal extent	LWS	370m north
Northumberland Shore	SSSI	430m north
Tyne Entrance	LWS	750m north
South Marine Park Lake	LWS	850m south east
Northumbria Coast	Ramsar	920m north
Northumberland Park	LWS	940m north
South Shields Dunes	LWS, LGS	1km south east
Durham Coast	SSSI	1.1km south east
Tynemouth to Seaton Sluice	SSSI	1.6km north east
Chirton Dene Park	SLCI	1.7km west
Preston Cemetery	LWS	2km north west

* LWS - Local Wildlife Site
 LGS - Local Geological Site
 SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 SLCI - Site of Local Conservation Importance

3.4 Site Walkover Survey

3.4.1 The site consists of an end-terrace two storey building, with a timber-decked patio area to the rear. In total, two habitat types were identified under the Phase 1 Survey Handbook definitions. These are:

- Buildings (J3.6)
- Bare ground (J4)

3.4.2 Buildings (J3.6)

An end-terrace, two-storey, brick-built former public house with a pitched slate roof occupies the majority of the site (Photographs 1 and 2). Windows and doors are a mixture of wooden and UPVC framed, with some window panes broken and boarded over. Multiple extensions to the building are present to the rear (south) of the property. Pebble dash and painted render is present on many rear elevations.

3.4.3 Bare Ground (J4)

The south of the site consists entirely of hardstanding in the form of a multiple levelled timber decked patio area (Photograph 3). No vegetation was recorded within this area.

3.5 **Controlled Invasive Species**

3.5.1 No evidence of controlled invasive plant species was noted on site.

3.6 **Limitations**

3.6.1 The survey was conducted within the recommended survey period by experienced and knowledgeable surveyors, and therefore no constraints with regard to methodology were encountered.

Photograph 1 – The Beacon public house, occupying the north of the site.



Photograph 2 – Rear (south) of the site.



Photograph 3 – Timber-decked patio area covering south of the site.



4.0 PROTECTED AND PRIORITY SPECIES RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Legal Status

4.1.1 This assessment focuses on those species afforded full protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Also included within this assessment are those species considered to be of local and/or national importance through their designation as a local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species or via their listing within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. A very brief summary of the protection that the current legislation provides is as follows:

4.1.2 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 make it illegal to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a European Protected Species (EPS).
- Deliberately disturb an EPS.^[*]
- Damage or destroy a resting place used by an EPS.

^[*]Disturbance of includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to:

- Impair their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young, hibernate or migrate.
- Affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

4.1.3 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built.
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- Disturb any bird, listed on Schedule 1 of the act, while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young, or to disturb dependent young of such a bird.

- Damage, destroy or obstruct any structure or place used for shelter by animals listed on schedule 5 of the act.
- Disturb animals listed on Schedule 5 when occupying a place used for shelter.

4.1.4 The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it illegal to:

- Kill, injure or take a badger.
- Cruelly ill treat a badger.
- Interfere with a badger sett.

4.1.5 Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006), all local authorities have a statutory obligation to conserve and enhance biodiversity when exercising their functions, including planning and development decisions. As such, this assessment also considers those priority species listed under Section 41 of the Act.

4.2 Preliminary Risk Assessment

4.2.1 From the results of the Phase 1 Survey site walkover, the habitats present both on site and within the locality, the protected species records provided by the local records centre and the known current distribution of species across the UK, it is concluded that the site has very little potential for the majority of protected species. The site does not contain any watercourses for species such as otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, fish (including eel *Anguilla Anguilla*, lamprey *Petromyzon marinus* and *Lampetra sp.*) and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. There are no ponds located within a 500m radius, nor is there any terrestrial habitat within the site suitable of supporting great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. The habitat is also unsuitable for reptiles, with bare ground for basking being heavily disturbed by vehicles and people and the site having no suitable rough vegetation in which to forage or shelter. The site also lacks the diverse structure provided by an assemblage of habitat types, which is required by

reptile species. Similarly, there is no habitat in which badger can shelter or forage and therefore this species can also be discounted. Red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*, although once common in County Durham, are now considered largely absent; the site does not fall within a red squirrel protection area or 5km buffer zone and does not contain sufficient quantities of suitable habitat to support a viable population. There are no buildings or trees containing suitable areas for nesting barn owl and no foraging habitat for this species on site. However, the site is considered suitable for some protected and priority species, and these species have been given due consideration as outlined below.

4.3 Bats (*Chiroptera spp.*)

4.3.1 The scheme will involve the demolition of the building on site, and therefore the building on site was inspected for features suitable of supporting roosting bats.

4.3.2 Building Inspection

The building on site consists of an end-terrace, two-storey, brick-built former public house with a pitched slate roof (Photographs 1 and 2). Multiple extensions are present to the rear of the property, with a mixture of mono-pitch, pitched and flat roofed sections (Photograph 2). Windows and doors are mainly wooden framed, though occasionally UPVC, with all frames appearing to seal well to the walls. A boarded window where a window pane has been broken is present on the east elevation. Throughout the building, the brickwork is seemingly in good condition, with renders present on the north elevation and on multiple elevations to the rear. Guttering was supported on wooden fascia boards which appeared to be sealed well to the walls. Overall, the property appeared generally well sealed externally, though potential access points were observed in pointing to the ridge on the south elevation of the main building roof. During the external inspection, no evidence of bats, such as droppings or staining, was discovered.

4.3.3 The property contained multiple roof voids internally, located within the main public house building and within the rear extensions (Photographs 4, 5 & 6). The main property had a central section which had been built into and formerly used as storage, with two low and narrow roof voids along the eaves. Slates were lined with both bitumen felt and plastic sheeting, and unlined in other areas. Insulation was present on the floor of some voids. The voids were generally very dusty with numerous cobwebs. No light was penetrating into the roof voids. No evidence of bat usage, such as droppings, staining or dead/live bats were found during the internal inspection of the property.

Photograph 4 - Low narrow roof void along eaves of main public house building.



Photograph 5 - Roof void of extension to the rear.



Photograph 6 - Roof void of extension to rear.



4.4 Nesting birds

4.4.1 A small number of common bird species were noted during the site walkover survey, including blackbird *Turdus merula*, carrion crow *Corvus corone* and jackdaw *Corvus monedula*. ERIC NE provided several records of rare and threatened birds within 2km of the site including four red status birds of high conservation concern and eleven amber status birds of medium conservation concern (JNCC, 2009). Of these, four species are listed as priority species under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006): house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, redshank *Tringa totanus* and curlew *Numenius arquata*, and five species are listed within the Durham BAP; house sparrow, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, song thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, redshank and curlew. Purple sandpiper *Calidris maritima* are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and therefore are attributed enhanced legal protection, as described in Section 4.1 above. The site provides limited suitable habitat for garden bird species, including house sparrow and song thrush, with no trees or shrubs on site, and the building being generally well sealed externally.

5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Statutory and Non-Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

5.1.1 There are several designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the proposed development site; River Tyne - tidal extent LWS, Northumberland Shore SSSI, Tyne Entrance LWS, South Marine Park Lake LWS, Northumbria Coast RAMSAR, Northumberland Park LWS, South Shields Dunes LWS & LGS, Durham Coast SSSI, Tynemouth to Seaton Sluice SSSI, Chirton Dene Park SLCI and Preston Cemetery LWS. These sites are geographically separated from the proposed development site, often by urban areas and by the River Tyne for those conservation sites to the north, and therefore will not be affected by the proposed development. Furthermore, the predicted post-development ecological impacts are similar to those already experienced under the current land use (see Section 5.5 below) and therefore it is expected that the proposed development will exert no additional ecological pressures on the surrounding land, including any designated nature conservation sites.

5.2 Habitats and Plant Species

5.2.1 Two types of habitat were recorded during the Phase 1 Survey. These are bare ground and a building. These habitat types are common and widespread both locally and nationally, with limited ecological value.

5.3 Protected Species

5.3.1 Overall, the site offers very limited opportunities for biodiversity.

5.3.2 Bats

Bat data supplied by ERIC NE (Durham Bat Group data pending) revealed no known roosts within 1km of the site. Surrounding habitat is limited, with land use to the south being primarily urban and a thin belt of semi-mature woodland to the north and small pockets of mature woodland to the east providing the only foraging habitat. Only a small number of potential bat access points were noted in the building and no evidence of use by bats, such

as droppings, staining, live or dead bats was recorded during the building inspection. The building was assessed as holding a very low risk of supporting roosting bats and therefore no further survey work is recommended.

5.4 NERC Act and Local BAP Priority Species

5.4.1 Given the nature of the habitats on site, there is likely to be no impact on priority species from the development.

5.5 Post Development Interference Impacts

5.5.1 The site consists exclusively of a building and hard standing and therefore the new building will be positioned on existing bare ground. As the site was formerly in use as a public house, it is expected that the proposals to develop the site for residential use will result in a reduction in light spillage, noise and general human disturbance. Therefore no significant post development impacts are predicted.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

6.1 General Working Principles

6.1.1 Given the limited ecological capacity of the site and the scale of the development, no significant impacts are predicted and no offence is likely. However, bats are highly mobile creatures capable of utilising many roosting sites throughout the year. Therefore a precautionary working method and emergency procedures, in the event that bats are encountered during works, are provided in Section 6.3.

6.2 Works to be undertaken by Ecologist

6.2.1 No further work from the ecologist is required.

6.3 Works to be undertaken by Developer/Landowner

6.3.1 No recommendations for further survey work have been made and no restrictions on the timing of work are necessary with regards to bats. However, the following information should be supplied to contractors undertaking works to the buildings:

- The removal of all roofing materials, including but not restricted to: fascia boards, slates, felt and timber, will be undertaken by hand and with care. The removed materials will be checked for evidence of bats (droppings) before being discarded, and exposed surfaces will be checked as the work progresses.

6.3.2 In the highly unlikely event that bats, or evidence of bats, are found at any stage during works the following procedures will be adopted:

- All works will stop.
- Dendra Consulting will be contacted immediately: 0191 371 9636 or 07900 894160. If Dendra cannot be reached, the Bat Conservation Trust will be contacted on their emergency helpline 0845 1300 228.
- If the roost is still intact, or can be repaired, this should be done immediately with bats left *in situ*.

- Any injured bats, and bats which cannot be returned to the roost and may be vulnerable to inclement weather and/or predation, should be collected using gloved hands and placed into a suitable container with breathing holes. Anyone bitten by a bat should seek immediate medical attention.
- In all cases where bats are found, the Senior Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) must be informed: In this instance the appropriate body is Natural England. Telephone: 0300 060 2219.

7.0 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS OF MITIGATION

Proposed activity	Characteristic of impact without mitigation	Nature and Probability of impact without mitigation	Proposed Mitigation/Enhancement	Nature and Probability of impact with mitigation
Demolition of building/clearance of site	None predicted	N/A	N/A	N/A

Impact assessment criteria (Adapted from CIEEM 2006)

Certain/Highly likely – 95-100% chance of occurrence

Probable – 50-95% chance of occurrence

Unlikely – 5-50% chance of occurrence

Extremely unlikely – less than 5% chance of occurrence.

8.0 REFERENCES

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