BAT SURVEYS &
RISK ASSESSMENT
6, WHITBURN ROAD
CLEADON

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This survey and report were commissioned by Fitz Architects on behalf of the owners of the property in June 2015.
The aim of the study was to confirm the possible presence of a bat roost in a property known as 6, Whitburn Road, in Cleadon where the building is to be demolished and a new property built in its place.

1.2 The building is currently occupied and has been heated over the colder months of the year.

Site description (See Photos)

1. 3 This is a detached two storey property with a pitched roof with a two storey extension to the rear and two single storey extensions. All the exterior walls of the whole property have been rendered and painted white. The pitched section of roof on the original house has been replaced; it is a lined slate roof. The extensions are roofed with roofing felt

1.4 The exterior of the building is in a very good state of repair with no cracks or crevices in the walls or at the wall tops. All sections of the roof are in a good state of repair. There are no gaps under any of the barge boards and all such trims are made of plastic.

1.5 The property is located on a busy road and is surrounded by other houses of varying age and construction.

Front elevation

Rear elevation

Surrounding Habitat

1.6 There is a small garden to the front of the property and a larger garden with areas of lawn, shrubs and trees to the rear. There are a number of mature trees on the roadside and in local gardens.

2. METHODOLOGY

Methods

2.1.1 A daylight survey including a check of the loft space was carried out on the initial site visit and as an added precaution two emergence surveys were completed during the bat breeding season.

2.1.2 The daylight survey involved checking the exteriors of the buildings for signs of bats, i.e. bat droppings and urine stains on the exterior walls, on window sills and on the ground. The loft space was also checked.

2.1.3 Persistent urine stains provide a good indication that there is an access point to a roost somewhere above where the stains are found and can be a useful indication that a site is used. Bat droppings are unlikely to persist over the winter period unless the exterior wall is very well sheltered, and are far less likely to be found during winter surveys on exteriors of buildings. Where the interior of a building is dry, or in a watertight loft space bat droppings and/or insect remains persist indicating that a site is used in other seasons of the year.

2.1.4 There were no cracks and crevices around the window frames and door frames or in the exterior walls that required checking with a torch or endoscope.

2.1.5 On some occasions large numbers of moth wings are found together with a small number of bat droppings. This usually indicates that bats, in particular brown long-eared or Natterer's bat, are feeding and/or roosting within a building. The survey also included checking for these signs of bat activity.

2.1.6 The emergence surveys ran from before sunset until the light had completely failed and checked for bats emerging from roosts and recorded bats feeding in the area near the building. The survey was concluded when it was only possible to identify the presence of a bat or bats in the area from recordings on the bat detectors and none of the animals were visible. This was well after the period of time after sunset that the species recorded usually emerge from roosts.
This methodology is in line with that given in the Bat Conservations Trust's 'Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines', 2nd Edition, section 8.3.3 which states ' Dusk emergence surveys should begin at least 15 minutes before sunset and should continue for up to two hours after sunset to take account of all species'.

2.1.7 **Timing**
The surveys were carried out on 1st July and 12th August 2015 during the bat breeding season.

Personnel
2.1.6 The emergence surveys were carried out by 2 experienced surveyors including the consultant who has worked in bat conservation in NE England for the past 26 years and holds both a scientific and roost visitors license and one other surveyor with > 5 years experience. For the dusk survey bat detectors were used to identify any species of bats recorded emerging/flying in the area, (Model - Stag Electronics -Bat Box IIID and Bat Box Duet)

2.2 THE LAW RELATING TO PROTECTED SPECIES

BATS
2.2.1 All bats in Britain are protected by law. Under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulation 1994, (Directive 92/43/EEC) it is illegal to:-
* catch, injure, kill or sell any bat
* damage, destroy or obstruct bat roosts (even when bats are not present)
* disturb bats while they are roosting, for example by entering known roosts or hibernation sites.

A breeding site or resting site of any bat is known as a bat roost. A bat roost is any structure as bat use for shelter or protection. It is an offence to damage or destroy a bat roost at any time of year.

2.2.2 The following activities are those most likely to cause disturbance to bat roosts:-
* Demolition of buildings
* Restoration, building conversion or remedial work including re-roofing, repointing of stonework.

* Timber treatment.
* Tree felling or extensive tree surgery.

Bats are most at risk from disturbance during the breeding season late May through to late September, after this the nursery roosts disperse. They are also vulnerable during the hibernation period; roughly late November to late March, as they are torpid and unable to move quickly from their hibernation roosts.

2.2.3 **Natural England** must always be consulted if any building work, including demolition, is to be undertaken which may cause disturbance to bats or their roost.

2.2.4 Any development which is likely to result in disturbance of a European protected species, or damage to its habitat usually requires a licence from Natural England.
'Development' is interpreted broadly to include projects involving demolition of buildings, rebuilding, structural alterations and additions to buildings.

2.3 RESULTS OF FIELD SURVEYS

July surveys

2.3.1 No signs of bat use were found on any of the exterior walls or on the ground around the building. No bats emerged from the building during the emergence survey.

2.3.2 A single common pipistrelle bat was recorded feeding in the trees on the roadside and over the gardens from 26 minutes after sunset. This was the only bat activity recorded.

2.3.3 No potential roost sites were found in any of the exterior walls and no access points were found to the loft space.

August surveys

2.3.4 No signs of bats were found and none emerged from the house during the emergence survey.

2.3.5 As in July, a single common pipistrelle bats was recorded foraging in the trees on the roadside, this entered the area from the opposite side of the road where there are further large dwelling houses.

2.4 SITE EVALUATION

2.4.1 The whole building is in an excellent state of repair and it is considered a very unlikely bat roost or hibernation sites because of the lack of potential roosts in the exterior walls or at the wall tops and there is no evidence of use. There are no access points into the loft space.

2.4.2 There are other properties surrounding the site that could potentially provide bat roost sites, and there is reasonable feeding habitat in the area.

3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 There is very low risk to any bat species due to the demolition of the building due to the lack of potential roost sites and the absence of any evidence of use.

3.2 There is always a very small possibility of a bat/bats being found during any building work or demolition work on any building of any construction. In line with good conservation practice, precautions need to be put in place working on the assumption that a bat(s) could be present.

3.3 Since no bat roost has been identified in the building it is considered that a license from Natural England will not be needed in this instance.

4. MITIGATION

Maintenance of Conservation Status

4.1 Given it is a known that bats occur in the general area, the following mitigating steps will be taken to minimise any possible impacts:-

a) The contractors will be made aware of the need to proceed with caution and to check for the presence of bats. They will be requested to follow a method statement, and should there be any difficulty complying with this method statement they will contact the consultant for further advice.

b) All the door and window frames will be removed with care. If any gaps are found around the frames then these will be checked by illuminating with a torch to ensure no bat is present before the frame is removed.

c) All roofing materials will be removed with care. Particular care will be taken when removing the roofing slates. The shell of the building will then be allowed to stand overnight before the walls are taken down.

d) In the unlikely event of a bat or bats been found during demolition work and accidentally disturbed, work will cease and the consultant will be contacted for advice (Tel 0191 3773697). If it is necessary to remove a bat to prevent it being harmed, then it will be handled with care and gloves will be

worn. It will be transferred to a box with ventilation and placed in a quiet place until it can be released at dusk or removed to another undisturbed part of the building where it can be placed out of the view of predators.

e) In the event of the consultant not being available Natural England will be contacted for advice. All contact numbers will be left with the owners and the contractors.

4.2. A method statement has been appended to this report that is to be issued to the contractors carrying out the work.

5. SUMMARY

5.1 The aim of the study was to confirm the possible presence of a bat roost in a property known as 6, Whitburn Road, in Cleadon where the building is to be demolished and a new property built in its place. The building is currently occupied and has been heated over the colder months of the year.

5.2 Daylight and emergence surveys and risk assessment was carried out in July and August 2015, to establish the potential for bats to use the building.

5.3 No signs of bats were found and no potential roost sites were found in exterior walls or in the roof space. A single common pipistrelle bat was recorded feeding in the area.

5.4 There is reasonable bat feeding habitat in the area.

5.5 The whole building is in an excellent state of repair and it is considered a very unlikely bat roost or hibernation sites because of the lack of potential roosts in the exterior walls or at the wall tops and there is no evidence of use. There are no access points into the loft space.
There are other properties surrounding the site that could potentially provide bat roost sites, and there is reasonable feeding habitat in the area.

5.6 There is very low risk to any bat species due to the demolition of the building due to the lack of potential roost sites and the absence of any evidence of use. Since no bat roost has been identified in the building it is considered that a Protected Species License from Natural England will not be needed in this instance.

5.7 In line with good conservation practice mitigation will be put in place to protect the conservation status of bats in the area. This will include careful working practices, careful removal of window and door frames and roofing materials. A method statement will be given to the contractors carrying out the work to ensure no accidental harm to bats.

METHOD STATEMENT – 6, WHITBURN ROAD, CLEADON.

1. Objective - To maintain and protect the populations of bats in the Cleadon area.

2. Though the building has been assessed as very unlikely to support a bat roost, it is known that bats occur in the general area and it is still possible to discover a bat during demolition work.
A bat can be hidden away in cracks, in rubble fill within a wall, in gaps in the mortar around windows or under roofing materials and can be difficult to see. Therefore great care is needed when working on any building when there are bats in the area.
It is the responsibility of the contractor to follow the guidelines set out below in Section 4 to ensure that no bats are harmed.

3. All bats in Britain are protected by law. Under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulation 1994, (Directive 92/43/EEC) it is illegal to:-

* catch, injure, kill or sell any bat
* damage, destroy or obstruct bat roosts (even when bats are not present)
* disturb bats while they are roosting, for example by entering known roosts or hibernation sites.

A breeding site or resting site of any bat is known as a bat roost. A bat roost is any structure as bat use for shelter or protection. It is an offence to damage or destroy a bat roost at any time of year.

The following activities are those most likely to cause disturbance to bat roosts:-

* Demolition of buildings
* Restoration, building conversion or remedial work including re-roofing, repointing of stonework.
* Timber treatment.

4. The following guidelines must be followed when demolishing the building:-

a) All roofing materials that need to be removed must be removed carefully by hand. Especial care should be taken when removing the roofing slates as there is a very small chance that bats could potentially roost beneath them.

b) All window and door frames must be removed with care. If any gaps are found around the frames then these should be checked by illuminating with a torch to ensure no bat is present before the frame is removed.

c) The shell of the building should be allowed to stand overnight before the walls are taken down.

d) In the very unlikely event of a bat/bats been found during demolition work and accidentally disturbed, work must cease and the consultant should be contacted for advice (Tel 0191 3773697). If it is necessary to remove a bat to prevent it being harmed, then it should be handled with care and gloves should

be worn. The bat should be transferred to a box with ventilation and placed in a quiet place until it can be released at dusk or removed to another undisturbed part of the buildings where it can be placed out of the view of predators.

e) In the event of the consultant not being available Natural England should be contacted for advice. The contact numbers for the consultant and Natural England should be kept on site.