

**BAT SURVEY &
RISK ASSESSMENT
FOR 21 SUNDERLAND 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, Mr & Mrs Sly in July 2015.

The aim of the study was to confirm the possible presence of a bat roost in a property known as 21 Sunderland Road, Cleadon where the building is to be demolished and a new house built in its place. The surrounding garden was also assessed for its ecological value.

1.2 The interior of the building has gutted because of flood damage and it has been unoccupied for more than a year.

Site description

1.3 The property is a 1960s bungalow, brick built with a pitched tile roof. There is a roof lining and the construction of the roof means there are a good number of timbers crossing the loft space.



Front elevation



Back elevation

- 1.4 The exterior of the building is in a very good state of repair with no cracks or crevices in the brickwork or around the window or doors frames. The roof is also in a good state of repair and no gaps could be seen in the roof lining. The loft space is very dusty with cobwebs covering the roof timbers and the underside of the lining. The small extension on the back elevation is also in a good state of repair externally with no gaps under the roofing felt.
- 1.5 There are other properties to either side of the bungalow and a very busy road to the west side.

Surrounding Habitat

- 1.6 Both the back and front gardens of 21 Sunderland Road have been laid to lawn. The lawn at the front of the property has been regularly mown but the back lawn remains un-mown. This lawn is dominated by perennial rye grass and common bent grass and has very limited plant species diversity. There are no trees in either garden, though some branches do overhang the fence on the north side. The back garden is surrounded by a high wooden fence.



Back garden with unmanaged lawn and overhanging trees

- 1.7 The only trees in the immediate area are those in the grounds of other properties. There is a large area of arable land to the east of the property and beyond this a road with further trees on the east side.

2. METHODOLOGY

Methods

- 2.1.1 Because of the state of repair of the exterior of the bungalow only a daylight survey and risk assessment were deemed necessary in this instance.
- 2.1.2 The daylight survey involved checking the exterior of the building 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 **Timing**

The site visit and assessment were carried out on 10th July 2015 during the bat breeding season.

Personnel

2.1.6 The assessment was carried out by an ecological consultant who has worked extensively on bat conservation in North-east England for the past 26 years.

2.1.7 **Weather Conditions**

The site survey was completed on a dry day and after a dry night, so any signs of bats such as bat droppings would have been visible.

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 SITE SURVEY

- 2.3.1 No signs of bat use were found on any of the exterior walls or on the ground around the building. There were no signs of bats using the roof space.
- 2.3.2 No potential roost sites were found in any of the exterior walls and no access points were found to the loft space.
- 2.3.3 There is reasonable but limited bat feeding habitat in the area but the high traffic levels nearby means that air pollution will impact on the flying insect fauna.
- 2.3.4 Surveys by the consultant of another property about 200m from the Sunderland Road site in June 2015 recorded a common pipistrelle bat foraging in the area. (This property lies to the west of Sunderland Road and there are more trees in the area, so better feeding habitat).

2.4 DESK STUDY

- 2.4.1 There are no existing records for 21 Sunderland Road or for Grid Square NZ3862 in which the property is located.
- 2.4.2 Records for the surrounding Grid Squares are as follows:-

NZ3861

2006	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Amenity area between Laburnum Grove & Sunderland Road
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2008	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Underhill Road Cleadon
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NZ3863

2007	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Sunniside Farm Cleadon
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2.5 SITE EVALUATION

- 2.5.1 The building is considered a very unlikely bat roost or hibernation site 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.
- 2.5.2 There are other properties in the area that could potentially provide bat roost sites, but there is limited feeding habitat in the area.
- 2.5.3 Common pipistrelle bats have been recorded within 200m of the site, but in an area with better feeding habitat.

- 2.5.4 The existing gardens have very limited ecological value as they only support one habitat, improved grassland with very limited plant species diversity.

3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 There is negligible 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.
- 3.4 The new property will largely be built on the site of the existing bungalow so there will be very little habitat loss. The new landscaping that will include species beneficial to wildlife will more than compensate for this and is very likely to have a positive impact on the biodiversity of the area.

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 tiles. The shell of the building will then be allowed to stand overnight before the walls are taken down.
 - d) In the very 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 21 Sunderland Road, Cleadon where the building is to be demolished and a new house built in its place. The surrounding garden was also assessed for its ecological value.
The interior of the building has gutted because of flood damage and has been unoccupied for more than a year.
- 5.2 A daylight survey and risk assessment was carried out in July 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.
- 5.4 There is reasonable limited bat feeding habitat in the area. Common pipistrelle bats have been recorded within 200m of the site, but in an area with better feeding habitat.
- 5.5 The building 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 in the area that could potentially provide bat roost sites.
The existing gardens have very limited ecological value as they only support one habitat, improved grassland with very limited plant species diversity.
- 5.6 There is negligible 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 – 21 SUNDERLAND 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 tiles 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.