

**BAT SURVEY & RISK ASSESSMENT
FOR 19 WEST MEADOWS ROAD
CLEADON**

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SUMMARY

- 1 The aim of the study was to survey the house at 19, West Meadows Road in Cleadon in relation to its' potential to support a bat roost. The property is to be demolished and a new house built on the site. The house is presently occupied and heated over the colder months of the year.
- 2 A daylight survey and risk assessment was carried out in February 2022, to establish the potential for bats to use the building. Another risk assessment had been carried out in August 2021.
- 3 No signs of bats were found and no potential roost sites were found in the exterior walls, at the wall tops or under the roof tiles of the house or garage.
- 4 There is good feeding habitat in the area, with mature trees on the garden boundaries, on the roadsides and in the grounds of other properties.
- 5 The property is considered very unlikely bat roost or hibernation site because of the lack of potential roosts in the exterior walls, at the wall tops or under roofing materials. There is no loft space as the living accommodation extends into the roof.
- 6 The proposed demolition has a negligible risk of having a negative impact on any bat species due 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.
7. In line with good conservation practice mitigation will be put in place to protect the conservation status of bats in the area. A method statement will be given to the contractors carrying out the work to ensure no accidental harm to bats.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This risk assessment and report were commissioned by the new owners of the property, Mr & Mrs Mulholland, in January 2022.
The aim of the study was to survey the house at 19, West Meadows Road in Cleadon in relation to its' potential to support a bat roost. The proposal is to demolish the existing house and garage and build a new house on the site.
- 1.2 The building is presently occupied and has been heated over the colder months of the year.

Site description (See photos)

- 1.3 The property is a brick-built dormer bungalow with a pitched tile roof. Part of the front elevation has rendered walls. There is a detached garage to one side of the property and a conservatory abutting onto the rear elevation.
- 1.4 The bungalow, garage and conservatory are in a very good state of repair as regards their potential to support a bat roost. No cracks or crevices were found in the walls or at the wall tops nor beneath the roofing tiles or barge boards. The windows and doors are modern and well fitted with no gaps around the frames.



Front elevation



Rear elevation



Roof and dormer window



Wall top - sealed



Surrounding Habitat (See aerial photo above)

- 1.5 There are gardens to the front and rear of the bungalow, mainly laid to lawn with a number of trees on the east boundary and further trees in the grounds of other properties and on the roadsides. There is arable land to the east of the property, a local road to the west and further houses to the north and south.

2. METHODOLOGY

Methods

- 2.1.1 The daylight survey involved checking the exteriors of the buildings for signs of bats and assessing the state of repair of the exteriors (there is no loft space). Given the state of repair, the lack of any evidence of bat use and the lack of potential for use by bats only a risk assessment was deemed necessary in this instance.
- 2.1.2 The signs of bats can include persistent urine stains and these 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 may also be found beneath a roost site around the exterior of a building, on the ground, on window sills or adhering to the walls. They can also be found inside buildings and in loft spaces and can be used as an indication of a roost even when no bats are present.
- 2.1.3 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.

Risk Assessment

2.1.4 All of the exteriors of the buildings could be checked for signs of bat use.

Personnel

2.1.5 The assessment was carried out by a consultant who has worked in bat conservation for the past 31 years and holds a protected species scientific license.

Timing

The site survey and assessment were carried out on 1st February 2022 during the bat hibernation season. A risk assessment had also been carried out in August 2021 for another client, this was during the bat breeding season. The weather conditions were fine and dry in 2022; there was a fine drizzle in August 2021 but there had been no heavy rain the previous night so any bat droppings around the exterior of the building would have remained in situ.

Constraints

No Constraints.

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 and 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 SURVEY & SITE ASSESSMENT

2.3.1 No signs of bats were found around the exteriors of the buildings in 2021 or 2022. There is no loft space in this property.

2.3.2 No potential roost sites were found as there are no cracks or crevices in the exterior walls or at the wall tops or behind the barge boards. No gaps could be seen under the roof tiles or at the roof edges.

2.3.3 The site is located in an area with good bat feeding habitat.

2.3.4 The Durham Bat Group holds the following records for the Cleadon area.

Grid Sq.	Date	Location	Species	Activity
NZ3859	2012	Carley Hill Primary School	Common pipistrelle	Flight
	2016	Beaumont Street, High Southwick	2 Common pipistrelles	Feeding
	2016	Lichfield Road High Southwick	2 Common pipistrelles	Foraging & commuting
NZ3860	2006	Nine Wells Gardens, Whitburn	Common pipistrelle	Field records
	2016	Fulwell Pumping Station	2 Common pipistrelles	Occasional roost
NZ3861	2006	Sunderland Football Academy	1 Common pipistrelle	Field record
	2008	Underhill Road, Cleadon	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
NZ3861/3862	2006	Park near Laburnum Grove	2+ Common pipistrelles	Feeding
NZ3862	2008	Britannia Inn Cleadon	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2006	West Park Road, Cleadon	Common pipistrelle	Foraging
	2006	Laburnum Grove	Common pipistrelle	Foraging
	2006	Front Street, Cleadon	Common pipistrelle	Foraging
	2006	Low Meadows, Cleadon	Common pipistrelle	Foraging
	2006	Village centre, Cleadon	Common pipistrelle 3+	Foraging
	2006	Cleadon Lane, Cleadon	Common pipistrelle	Foraging

	2006	Peacock Lodge, Cleadow	Common pipistrelle	Foraging
	2015	Hexham House, Shields Road, Cleadow	Common pipistrelle	Active roost then
	2020	Laburnum Grove, Cleadow	Common pipistrelle	Flight
NZ3863	2002	Cleadow Hill LNR	1 Common pipistrelle	Commuting
	2002	Old Mill, Cleadow	1 Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2006	Near Cleadow Hills Fram	Common pipistrelle	Foraging
	2007	Sunnyside Farm Cleadow	3+ Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2015	Park Shiel, Cleadow Park	36 Pipistrelles	Roost then
NZ3959/3960	2003	Mere Knolls Cemetery	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
NZ3959/4059	1998	Sea Road, Fulwell	c. 50 Pipistrelle	Active roost then
NZ3961	2013	Cleadow/Whitburn	Common pipistrelle	Flight (NBMP transect)
NZ4059	2019	Roker Terrace, Sunderland	1+ Common pipistrelle	Flight
	2020	Roker promenade	1 Common pipistrelle	Commuting
NZ4061	2004	Whitburn Pond	6, Species unknown	Flight
	2006?	Moor Court. Whitburn	Species unknown	Flight
	2007	Cornthwaite Park, Whitburn	1 Common pipistrelle	Foraging
NZ4062	2006	Lizard Lane, Whitburn	1 Common pipistrelle	Field record
	2007	Whitburn Cemetery	1+ Common pipistrelle	Foraging
NZ4063	2008 & 2011	Shearwater, Whitburn	2 Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2013	Whitburn Coastal Park	Common pipistrelle	Foraging
NZ4161	2005	Whitburn Comprehensive School	1 Common pipistrelle	Foraging
NZ4163	2017	Whitburn	1, Species unknown	Flight

2.4 SITE EVALUATION

- 2.4.1 The property 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 is no loft space in the house that could be used by bats.
- 2.4.2 There are other properties in the general area that could potentially provide bat roost sites.
- 2.4.3 The surrounding area provides good bat feeding habitat though much of the countryside to the east is arable land and the flying insect fauna has probably been impacted by insecticides.

3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The proposed work to demolish the existing house and garage and build a new house on the site has a negligible risk of having a negative impact on any bat species due 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 buildings it is considered that a license from Natural England will not be needed in this instance.

4. MITIGATION

Maintenance of Conservation Status

- 4.1 Though it is considered there is a negligible risk of any negative impact on bats from the proposed development, it is a known that bats occur in the general area. The following precautionary 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) The climbing plants against the walls of the house and any shrubs or conifers that need to be removed to allow for the new building should all be removed outside the bird breeding season.
 - c) All roofing materials from the house and garage will be removed with care and all door and window frame will be removed with care prior to the walls being taken

down. If any cracks or crevices are found around the frames these will be checked for the presence of bats by illuminating with a torch.

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

e) 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.

f) 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.

4.3 Nest boxes for small hole-nesting birds will be erected in the rear garden. It is suggested that 6 boxes could be erected along the trees on the rear boundary or attached to the garden shed. (There is potential for birds such as blackbird to nest in the garden, but very few opportunities for hole-nesting species)

METHOD STATEMENT – 19, WEST MEADOWS ROAD, CLEADON

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

2. Though the property 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 working on the buildings-

a) The climbing plants against the walls of the house and any shrubs or conifers that need to be removed to allow for the new building should all be removed outside the bird breeding season

b) All roofing materials from the house and garage must be removed carefully by hand before the walls are taken down.

c) The door and window frames should be removed with care before any walls are demolished. If any cracks or crevices are found around the frames these should be checked for the presence of bats by illuminating with a torch.

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

e) In the very unlikely event of a bat/bats been found during the 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 building where it can be placed out of the view of predators.

f) 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.