



Durham Bat group

**Bat and Barn Owl Risk Assessment of house & garden at
5 High Row, Gainford County Durham
5 High Row 16th March 2020**

Durham Bat Group (DBG) was commissioned by Rachel Neville of 9 High Row, Gainford to carry out an authoritative Bat and Barn Owl Risk Assessment of the house & garden at 5 High Row, Gainford. The survey was to be suitable for evaluation by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in respect of restoration to modern domestic use.

The premises comprise a two-storey terraced house. It is understood that the intention is to Demolish and rebuild the extension at the back of the house and build a garage in the garden with access from Piggy Lane.

Summary

The house & garden at 5 High Row were visited on 14th March 2020

The survey concentrated on the garden wall and the interior and exterior of the house & garden proposed for development and the immediate surrounding area.

There is no evidence to suggest that any bats use the house & garden as a nursery. The risk of use as a hibernaculum is small and the risk to hibernating bats can be avoided by the timing and methodology of the programme of work. There is a possibility of casual use by small numbers of bats, but the mitigation and timing outlined in this report will ensure that any risks to bats are insignificant.

There is no evidence to suggest that the building at 5 High Row are used by Barn Owls.

No trees will be affected by the proposed development.

**Bat and Barn Owl Risk Assessment of house & garden at
5 High Row, Gainford, County Durham
17th March 2020**

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B Introduction

Grid Reference: NZ1693 1686



B1 Background to development

5 High Row is a two-storey Grade 2 listed terraced house situated in the village of Gainford. It is built of a mish-mash of river cobbles, roughly dressed stone with more modern repairs in brick and breeze block.

The exterior has been rendered and much of this remains, particularly at the front of the house. The roof two lower courses of Teesdale slate but above these the roof is covered with modern clay pantiles.

The house & garden are situated at an altitude of approximately 111 m OD.



View of the front of 5 High Row, Gainford

5 High Row is a dwelling house which was originally part of the outbuildings of No 7 the Mansion House owned by Lord Byron and, before that, his in-laws, the Barrett-Brownings. The building is shown on the 1865 Ordnance Survey, the earliest map of the county.

B2 Details of proposed works

No trees on this site will be affected by the proposed development.

C Survey and Site Assessment

C1 Pre-existing information on bats at survey site

Durham Bat Group has no records from 5 High Row but several from the surrounding area including No8 High Row.

1k Square	Location	Village	English name	Activity
NZ1114	Grafts Farm	Whorlton	Pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1114	Wycliffe Hall	Wycliffe	Common pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1114	Wycliffe Hall	Wycliffe	Soprano pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1114	River Tees	Wycliffe	Daubenton's bat	Flight
NZ1114	Wycliffe Hall	Wycliffe	Soprano pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1120	Barnfield Cottage	Staindrop	Pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1211	Smallways Pond	Newsham	Common pipistrelle	feeding
NZ1211	Smallways Pond	Newsham	Brown long-eared bat	commuting
NZ1211	Smallways Pond	Newsham	Whiskered/Brandt's	commuting
NZ1212	West Middleton Farmhouse	Hutton Magna	Unidentified	Droppings
NZ1215	Stub House	Winston	Unidentified	Droppings
NZ1217	Church Cottage	Little Newsham	Whiskered/Brandt's	Nursery
NZ1217	Little Newsham Hall	Winston	Unidentified	Roost
NZ1217	Little Newsham Hall	Winston	Noctule	Flight
NZ1222	Raby Park Laundry	Staindrop	BLE	Feeding roost
NZ1314	Hillcrest	Ovington	Common pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1314	Clifford View	Ovington	Pipistrelle	Roost
NZ1316	Highcliffe Cottage	Winston	Brown long-eared bat	Roost
NZ1316	Methodist Church	Winston	Whiskered bat	Roost
NZ1320	Beechside	Staindrop	Common pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1320	Staindrop Hall	Staindrop	Soprano pipistrelle	Roost
NZ1320	Staindrop Hall	Staindrop	Common pipistrelle	Feeding

NZ1320	Staindrop Hall	Staindrop	Brown long-eared bat	Feeding
NZ1320	Staindrop Hall	Staindrop	Noctule	Commuting
NZ1320	Staindrop Hall	Staindrop	Whiskered/Brandt's	Feeding
NZ1421	Burton House	Staindrop	Natterer's bat	Roost
NZ1523	Paddock Mire Farm	Evenwood Gate	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
NZ1523	Paddock Mire Farm	Evenwood Gate	Whiskered/Brandt's	Feeding
NZ1616	8 High Row	Gainford	Common Pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1616	St Mary's Church	Gainford	Common pipistrelle	Roost

NZ1616	River Tees	Gainford	Daubenton's bat	Flight
NZ1621	Emerson House	Hilton	Brown long-eared bat	Roost
NZ1716	Eden Park	Gainford	Unidentified	Roost
NZ1716	Chapel Terrace	Gainford	Pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1716	St Peter's School	Gainford	Unidentified	Roost
NZ1716	Eden Crest	Gainford	Pipistrelle	Crashed Bat
NZ1717	Academy Gardens	Gainford	Pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1717	West View	Gainford	Common pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1717	Academy Gardens	Gainford	Unidentified	Roost
NZ1719	Headlam	Gainford	Pipistrelle	Roost
NZ1720	Front Street	Ingleton	Common pipistrelle	Nursery
NZ1922	Ivy House	Bolam	Brown long-eared bat	Roost
NZ2015	The Mill House	Piercebridge	Common pipistrelle	Roost
NZ2115	B6275 road bridge	Piercebridge	Daubenton's bat	Nursery
NZ2115	Bluebell Cottage	Piercebridge	Pipistrelle	Roost
NZ2115	Carlbury Hall Nursing Home	Piercebridge	Unidentified	Roost
NZ2115	The Bridge	Piercebridge	Daubenton's bat	Nursery
NZ2115	River Tees	Piercebridge	Common pipistrelle	Flight
NZ2115	River Tees	Piercebridge	Noctule	Flight
NZ2116	Haulage depot	Piercebridge	Brown long-eared bat	Feeding roost
NZ2118	Former St. Mary's Church	Denton	Pipistrelle	Roost
NZ2214	River Tees	Mansfield	Noctule	Foraging

NZ2214	River Tees	Mansfield	Myotis sp	Foraging
NZ2215	River Tees	High Coniscliffe	Common pipistrelle	Commuting

C2 Status of species in the local/regional area

All the extant data on bats in Gainford are summarized above. Gainford is situated on the banks of the Tees which is upstream of any major conurbation and the riverine woodland is extensive and, in some places, semi-natural. As a result, it is very rich in bats.

All bats and their roosts are protected by law under Schedule Five of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). The *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* (CROW Act) extends protection to cover reckless damage and disturbance. The *Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2010* require licences and consultation with English Nature (Natural England) for works which may adversely affect bats. The legislation makes it an absolute offence to disturb bats or their roosts, regardless of whether it was intentional or unintentional.

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 provides for the conservation of important hedgerows and their trees. The presence of bats is a relevant consideration in deciding whether or not a hedgerow should be preserved.

The National Bat Monitoring Programme has been running since 1995. The survey coordinates a variety of colony counts, hibernaculum surveys and field surveys. The latest report (2017) notes that sufficient data are collected by the programme to produce population trends for 11 of the UK's 17 resident bat species.

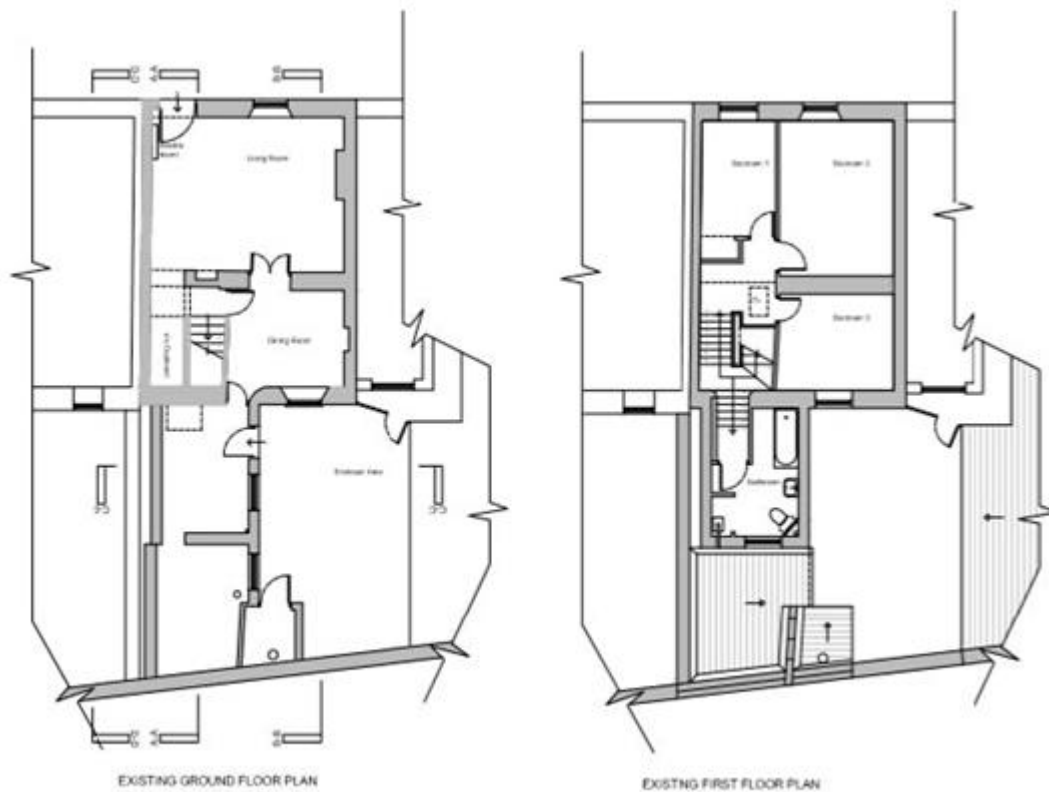
The 2018 results show that currently all species surveyed appear to be stable or increasing based on data from at least one survey. While these are positive results, it should be remembered that these trends reflect relatively recent changes to bat populations since the 1990s. It is generally considered that prior to this in the period between the 1950s and at least the late 1980s there were significant historical declines in bat populations. Furthermore, the species coverage of the programme is not yet fully comprehensive.

Two factors will have affected bats in 2019. The relatively warm winter means that bats are likely to have had disturbed hibernation. If they become active without access to insect food, then their fat reserves drop and their chances of surviving and breeding successfully the following season are reduced. The Spring and early Summer of 2019 were particularly damp and delayed, so bats were late in starting to fly and this is also likely to have a detrimental effect on bat breeding success.

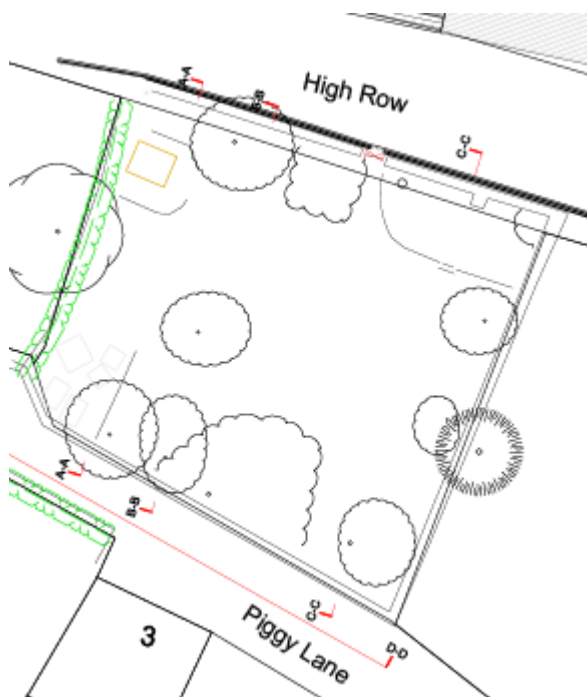
County Durham is the least wooded county in England and the woodland which remains is concentrated in the river valleys where the steep bank sides have made it uneconomic to extract timber. The rivers and the woodland both support large numbers of the insects upon which all British bats feed. The mature trees also provide roost sites for bats. The distributions of bat species in Co. Durham, other than Common Pipistrelle, thus follow the river valleys.

C4 Survey area

The survey concentrated on the garden wall and the interior and exterior of the house & garden proposed for development and the immediate surrounding area.



Ground and first floor plans of existing house



Garden of property to the front of the house

C5 Habitat description

The garden of 5 High Row, Gainford is clear with just a few pruned ornamental shrubs. The only part of possible interest to bats are the perimeter wall on the south, east and north sides. These are made of mortared river boulders and recycled masonry. The workmanship is poor and there are crevices which

could be used by individual bats as roost sites, overnight or over-winter. However, no crevices were found which would support a hibernating colony of bats.

The house at 5 High Row is described by Gainford Local History Society as being “part of an attractive Georgian terrace”. This is somewhat disingenuous as the house was clearly built as an outhouse and later convert for domestic use. The quoins of the building are ashlar, but the bulk of the walls are made of river gravel and recycled building stone. Repairs have been made with breeze block and brick. The walls are rendered on the exterior. The house was inhabited by the same owner for more than twenty years until acquired by the present owners.

The roof is steeply pitched and covered with pantiles laid on two lower courses of Teesdale slate. The roof is lined with membrane and the roof void is open throughout.



Inside the roof of 5 High Row, Gainford

5 High Row, Gainford is surrounded by the rest of the village which stands on the north side of a ford over the Tees. It is known to go back to Anglo-Saxon times and the buildings and structure of the village display the diversity associated with similar ancient settlements.

More widely, the majority of Gainford is surrounded by high grade arable land but the most important feature of the surroundings is the River Tees with its riverine woodland.



Aerial photograph to show habitats round High Row, Gainford

At Gainford much of the riverine woodland is semi-natural with mature trees that are essential for bats such as Noctules. The Tees valley is probably the most important location for bats in North-east England as the combination of clean water, trees with potential roost holes and trees and plants which are the food source for the insect prey on which all British bats feed.

The factors affecting the probability that the house & garden at 5 High Row were used by bats were considered.

Factors increasing risk of bat use	Factors decreasing risk of bat use
Pre-20th century construction	
Close to woodland	
Close to water	
Listed building or monument	
Lowland, rural setting	
Numerous gaps in stonework	
Roof warmed by the sun	

When considered as a desk exercise, the risk of bat use of the house & garden at 5 High Row, Gainford would appear to be very high.

However, in practice there is no enclosed space sufficiently large to accommodate a nursery roost anywhere inside the house or as part of its exterior. There are small crevices which could be used by hibernating bats, but none appeared to be large enough to shelter a colony of hibernating bats.

Survey

C6.1 Methods

The garden wall was searched for signs of bats such as bats themselves, droppings, grease marks, absence of dirt and cobwebs in openings and, most importantly, the availability of suitably sized crevices which could provide a temporary overnight bat roost or a longer term hibernaculum.

The exterior of the house was surveyed for signs of bat use, such as scratch marks, grease marks and droppings as appropriate for the location and surface. The rendered front made this search particularly easy. The external search was concentrated in those areas where gaps in masonry, at the eaves and in

the roofing materials, could provide roost sites. A powerful torch and binoculars were used when necessary to identify and examine possible crevices.

The house was examined internally for indications and contra-indications of bat use. The house had been in use for domestic dwelling until recently. Where the plaster was missing to reveal the walls, a high-powered torch was used to examine cracks and crevices for the presence of bats and cobwebs and suitable deep cracks were examined with an endoscope for signs of hibernating bats.

The floors and the roof beams were searched for bats, droppings, grease marks, scratch marks, areas free of cobwebs and feeding signs such as moth wings.

The house & garden were also searched for evidence of use by Barn Owls. The floor of the outside building was searched for droppings and owl pellets, particularly underneath features which would provide suitable perches. All suitable nesting niches were examined for presence of old nests, droppings and pellets.

C6.2 Timing

The survey was carried out in the afternoon of 14th March 2020.

C6.3 Weather conditions

Sunny with light scattered showers.

Cloud 6/8 Cumulus

Temperature: 8C

Wind: SW force 4.

C6.4 Personnel

The survey was carried out by Noel Jackson, trainer for Durham Bat Group, who has been a licensed bat worker since 1982.

C7 Results

External survey

GARDEN: There were no droppings or grease marks found on the garden wall. There were many small cracks that could be used by an individual bat as an overnight roost, but they were all below shoulder height and did not appear to be deep enough to offer the protection needed for hibernation.

HOUSE: The rendered exterior meant that there were few external crevices in the external walls of the house which could be used by bats and any droppings or grease marks would have been clearly visible. The pan tiled roof sat neatly on the lower courses of Teesdale slate. These were high quality so again there were few obvious places which could provide a roost site. The one place identified as having potential for use by bats was the flashing round the chimney stacks, no signs of bat use were found. If roof work is required around the chimney, risk to bats would be minimized if completed in late Summer from mid-August through to October when any new-season's babies will be large enough to fly.

Internal Survey



Inside 5 High Row, Gainford

The interior of the main building has few places suitable for roosting bats.

Some of the roof timbers towards the back of the house were relatively old, adze-hewn with the rounded shape of the original tree trunk still visible. However, most were more modern and machine sawn. The quality of the carpentry was poor and there were no good roost sites around the joints of the kingposts and other main timbers.

The roof was lined with membrane and the only possible roost sites for bats would be round the roof timbers where bats would be visible and exposed.

There were no droppings, lepidopteran wings, scratch marks or grease marks on the floor, walls or on the rafters.

There were no pellets, droppings or any other signs of any use by Barn Owls.

C8 Interpretation and evaluation

C8.1 Presence/absence

No signs of bat use were found in this survey.

It is known that bats forage over the gardens and back of the houses on High Row in the summer but this is to be expected as there is a known Common Pipistrelle nursery colony at No8 High Row and several other known breeding colonies in the village. In view of this, the likelihood of individual bats using small roost sites on 5 High Row and all the other buildings in the vicinity is quite high. These would not be the breeding females but non-breeding females and males. No special case needs to be made for action at 5 High Road although contractors should be made aware that individual bats are quite likely to be found and that the good practice outlined in the method statement should always be followed.

The lowland setting, the height of the garden wall and lack of suitable cracks in the house and garden walls of the garden and lowland setting mean that 5 High Row is unlikely to be used as a hibernaculum.

There is no evidence in the form of pellets, feathers or bird lime to suggest that either the house or garden at 5 High Row could be used by Barn Owls.

C8.3 Site status assessment

The house & garden at 5 High Row are not an important site for bats.

5 High Row is not a nursery roost and is very unlikely to be a hibernaculum.

Casual use by individual bats is possible with Common Pipistrelles being the species most likely to occur. However, the mitigation and timing outlined in the method statement attached to this report will ensure that the risk to bats will be minimized.

C8.4 Constraints (factors limiting survey results)

Full access was given to all parts of house & garden at 5 High Row. The field work was completed on 14th March 2020. Bats had already been observed in other parts of Co. Durham although none had been reported as moving back to breeding sites.

D Impact Assessment

D1 Pre- and mid-development impacts

It is highly unlikely that the proposed development will disturb any breeding or hibernating bats. The small residual risks to casually roosting individuals will be avoided by the method statement and mitigation.

D2 Long-term impacts

The proposed development is unlikely to have any long-term negative impact on bats.

D3 Post-development interference impacts

5 High Row is a private house. The possibilities of disturbance of the proposed roost crevices in the rebuilt garden wall will be minimal provided that any security lights do not shine on the roost entrances.

D4. Other impacts

D5 Summary of impacts at site level

The proposed development will be unlikely to affect bats at 5 High Row.

D6 Summary of impacts in a wider context

It is unlikely that the proposed development will make any significant difference to the bat populations of the surrounding area.

E Land Ownership

It is understood that the land is the property of the developer.

F Mitigation

F1 Mitigation Strategy

The proposed mitigation strategy is based on two main principles

1) There should be no possibility of damage to individual bats at any time as a result of the proposed development.

2) The long-term security of the local bat population should be ensured.

The risks to bats can be minimized by the following:

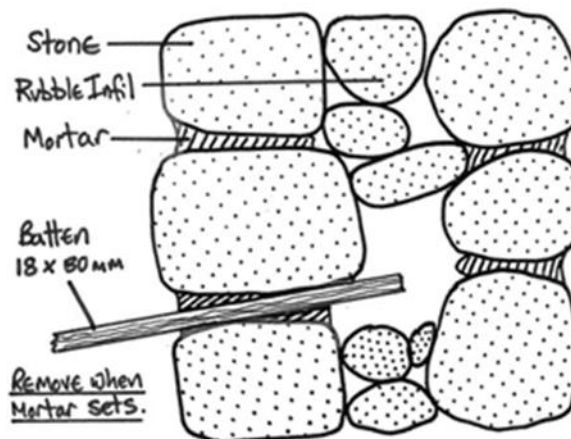
- Any pointing or other work on the walls should be carried out when bats are active (mid-April till end-October) to avoid the risk of incarcerating torpid bats.
- Roof coverings should be removed by hand and any crevices revealed checked for bats.
- Fittings such as weather boards and guttering should be removed by hand and any cavities revealed checked for bats.
- Internal woodwork should be checked before removal and the cavities revealed when beams and rafters are removed should be checked for the presence of bats.
- In the event, that timber treatment should prove necessary, it should be carried out using bat-friendly chemicals such as permethrin and cypermethrin.

F2 Roost Creation

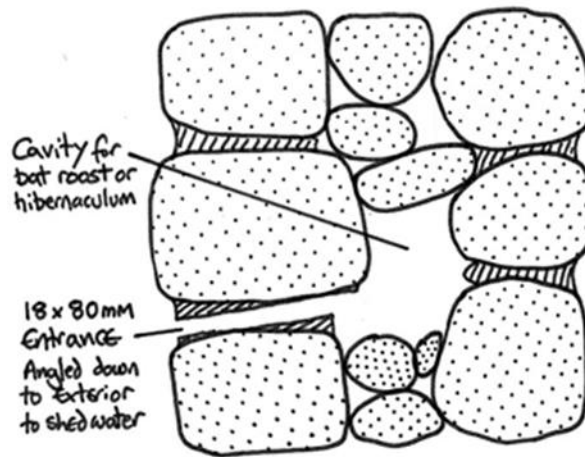
To ensure continuity of potential roost sites for bats at 5 High Row, Gainford, crevice roosts will be incorporated into the inside of the garden wall every two or three metres as the wall is rebuilt. These are easy to create and cost nothing.

Crevices suitable for roosting bats can be created by leaving small gaps in the wall during pointing which give access to the rubble infill. Gaps should slope up slightly to shed water and have a height of 18mm (range 15 -20) and be a minimum of 80mm wide. The height is critical; too small and bats cannot gain access, too big and birds will nest. The roost entrances are best made by placing 18 x 80mm battens into the wall to reach the rubble infill prior to pointing and removing them once the mortar has set. The entrance hole should slope up into the wall to shed water. The cavity inside should be at least 100x100x100mm.

Crevice roosts created on north- and west-facing walls will have relatively cool temperature profiles and more likely to be suitable for hibernacula.



Before



After

F3 Exclusion

Not applicable in this case.

G Works to be undertaken by the ecologist

- Further support and advice for creating the crevice roosts in the garden wall as needed.
- Providing immediate advice and help as needed in the unlikely event that bats are found during the development.

H Works to be undertaken by the developer

- Follow best practice and timing as outlined in the attached method statement.
- Inclusion of bat crevices in garden wall every two or three metres.

I Post-development Site Safeguard

The location of the new roost sites in the developed building will ensure that they are unlikely to be disturbed.

I1 Roost Management and Maintenance

The crevice roost sites will be part of the fabric of the garden wall and will be maintained as part of normal domestic management.

I2 Population Monitoring

Bat use of house & garden at 5 High Row, Gainford will be monitored by Durham Bat Group as part of their on-going programme of work.

I3 Mechanism for ensuring delivery

A Contractors' Method Statement is attached which outlines the timescales and methodologies to be adopted to minimize the risk to bats

J Timetable of works

The proposed development will avoid disturbance of bats. Although the house at 5 High Row, Gainford is not thought to be used by bats, there is a small possibility that bats may be found that were not anticipated by the survey. This could be for a number of reasons:

- 1) Bats are mobile and may adopt new sites overnight.
- 2) Bat colonies have particular temperature requirements and use some roosts only in extreme weather conditions and thus on an occasional basis.
- 3) Non-breeding bats, particularly males, utilise non-optimal sites that would not be used by breeding colonies. These odd, individual bats are very hard to detect, particularly if they choose to roost deep in crevices.

Work practice should be such that potential roost sites are exposed and examined for bats before they have the potential to be damaged. This will require roofing, guttering, weather boarding, beams, rafters and any other woodwork and fixtures to be removed by hand.

If an individual bat is found as work progresses it should be picked up wearing gloves, given water and put in a safe place for release that evening. It is conceivable, though much less likely, that a colony of bats could move in. In the event of this, work should be halted and the bat help line (0845 1300 228) or Noel Jackson (0778 633 2465) the bat consultant for this project should be consulted immediately for advice.

A method statement for contractors is attached which outlines timings and methodologies to minimise any residual risk to bats.

K References

- The state of the UK's Bats: National bat Monitoring Programme Population trends 2017. Bat Conservation Trust.

L Annexes

Not applicable.

M Summary

The house & garden at 5 High Row were visited on 14th March 2020

There is no evidence to suggest that any bats use the house & garden as a nursery.

The risk of use as a hibernaculum is small and the risk to hibernating bats can be avoided by the timing and methodology of the programme of work.

There is a possibility of casual use by small numbers of bats, but the mitigation and timing outlined in this report will ensure that any risks to bats are insignificant.

There is no evidence to suggest that the building at 5 High Row are used by Barn Owls.

No trees will be affected by the proposed development.

The liability of Durham Bat Group or any member thereof for any damages, costs, claims or expenses which may be incurred in any way whatsoever as a result of any reliance placed upon the information given and opinions expressed in any report or correspondence shall be limited to the value of the fee paid.

Method Statement for works at 5 High Row, Gainford

This statement should be copied to the site owner, designer, Clerk of works, and to those contractors whose work may affect bat roosts including those involved in conversion, timber treatment, roofing and building works.

All bats have full legal protection

All bat species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Conservation (Natural Habitats &C) Regulations 1994 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) (Amendment) Regulations 2007. As a result, it is an absolute offence to harm a bat or to damage or disturb any bat roost, whether occupied or not. **Prosecution could result in imprisonment, fines of £5,000 per animal affected and confiscation of vehicles and equipment used.** In order to minimise the risk of breaking the law it is essential to work with care to avoid harming bats, to be aware of the procedures to be followed if bats are found during works, and to commission surveys and expert advice as required to minimise the risk of reckless harm to bats.

Mitigation Strategy

The proposed mitigation strategy is based on two main principles:

- 1) There should be no possibility of damage to individual bats at any time as a result of the proposed development.
- 2) The long-term security of the local bat population should be ensured.

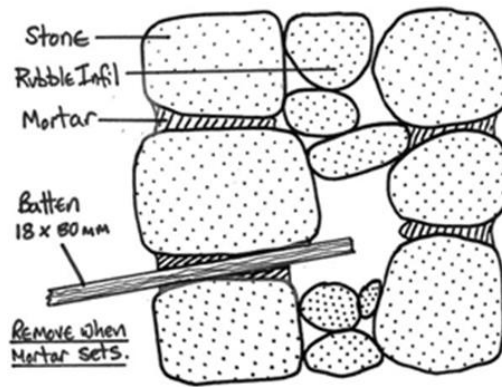
The risks to bats will be minimized by the following:

- Any pointing or other work on the walls should be carried out when bats are active (mid-April till end-October) to avoid the risk of incarcerating torpid bats.
- Roof coverings should be removed by hand and any crevices revealed checked for bats.
- Fittings such as weather boards and guttering should be removed by hand and any cavities revealed checked for bats.
- Internal woodwork should be checked before removal and the cavities revealed when beams and rafters are removed should be checked for the presence of bats.
- In the event, that timber treatment should prove necessary, it should be carried out using bat-friendly chemicals such as permethrin and cypermethrin.

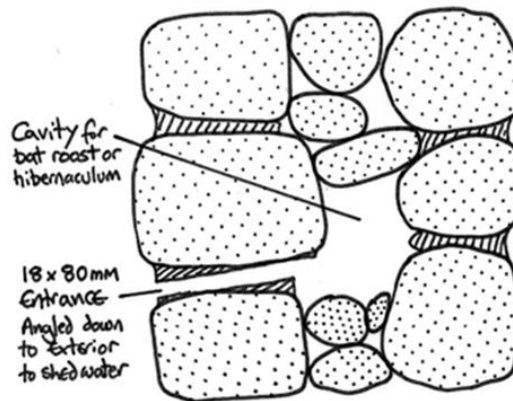
To ensure continuity of potential roost sites for bats at 5 High Row, Gainford, crevice roosts will be incorporated into the inside of the garden wall every two or three metres as the wall is rebuilt. These are easy to create and cost nothing.

Crevices suitable for roosting bats can be created by leaving small gaps in the wall during pointing which give access to the rubble infill. Gaps should slope up slightly to shed water and have a height of 18mm (range 15 -20) and be a minimum of 80mm wide. The height is critical; too small and bats cannot gain access, too big and birds will nest. The roost entrances are best made by placing 18 x 80mm battens into the wall to reach the rubble infill prior to pointing and removing them once the mortar has set. The entrance hole should slope up into the wall to shed water. The cavity inside should be at least 100x100x100mm.

Crevice roosts created on north- and west-facing walls will have relatively cool temperature profiles and more likely to be suitable for hibernacula.



Before



After

Work Schedule

Even though the house at 5 High Row, Gainford is not thought to be a breeding roost, there is still a small risk that bats may be found, particularly in autumn, so a prudent and cautious methodology for the work is needed. Work practice should be such that potential roost sites are exposed and examined for bats before they have the potential to be damaged. This will require roofing, guttering, weather boarding, door frames, windows and other fixtures to be removed by hand.

Finding roosts

Bats and their roosts can be very difficult to detect and there is a risk that individual non-breeding bats may be present in the outbuilding before, during and particularly after the breeding season. A Pipistrelle bat is small enough to fit into a match box and roosts in cracks just 15-20mm wide. Common sites for roosts include beneath the pantiles, slates and flashing, in crevices between stonework, particularly where these extend to the rubble fill or wall cavity, in mortise joints, around window frames and behind barge boards.

If you find a bat

If an individual bat is found as work progresses it should be picked up wearing gloves, given water and put in a safe place for release that evening. It is conceivable, though much less likely, that a colony of bats could move in. In the event of this, work should be halted and the bat help line (0845 1300 228) or Noel Jackson (0778 633 2465) the bat consultant for this project should be consulted immediately for advice.