

**BAT SURVEY & RISK ASSESSMENT
FOR BRACKEN COTTAGE
SHINCLIFFE**

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SUMMARY

- 1 The aim of the study was to survey the house known as Bracken Cottage in Shincliffe, Durham in relation to its' potential to support a bat roost. The proposal is to extend the house on the front elevation.
The building is presently occupied and has been heated over the colder months of the year. The front porch is to be extended and a small area on the upper storey to allow a corridor between two sections of the house.
- 2 A daylight survey and risk assessment was carried out in February 2022, to establish the potential for bats to use the building.
- 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 building.
- 4 There is good feeding habitat in the area around the property.
- 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.
- 6 The proposed extension of the building 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 Emerald Architects on behalf of the owner of the property, Mr D. Williams, in February 2022. The aim of the study was to survey the house known as Bracken Cottage in Shincliffe, Durham in relation to its' potential to support a bat roost. The proposal is to extend the house on the front elevation.
- 1.2 The building is presently occupied and has been heated over the colder months of the year. The front porch is to be extended and a small area on the upper storey to allow a corridor between two sections of the house.

Site description (See photos)

- 1.3 The property is a two-storey brick-built dormer cottage with no loft space and a tile roof. The exterior walls are rendered and painted.
- 1.4 The building is in a very good state of repair with no cracks or crevices in the exterior walls and no gaps could be seen beneath the roofing tiles or the tiles on the side of the porch. The barge boards are well fitted and sealed where the boards meet the external walls so there are no gaps behind them. The window and door frames are modern and no cracks or crevices were found around the frames. No gaps could be seen under the lead-flashing.



Front elevation showing existing porch



Roof area that will be affected by the development



Upper section of front elevation that will be part of the development showing boxed soffits with no gaps to the base or sides.



Wall top - sealed



Surrounding Habitat

- 1.5 There are a few other dwelling houses in the immediate vicinity of Bracken Cottage with the village of Shincliffe to the north and High Shincliffe to the south. There are a large number of mature trees in the area surrounding the property and the River Wear lies a short distance to the north.

2. METHODOLOGY

Methods

- 2.1.1 The daylight survey involved checking the exterior of the building for signs of bats and assessing the state of repair of the exterior. 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 exterior of the building 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.

2.1.6 Timing

The site survey and assessment were carried out on 11th February 2022 during the bat hibernation season. The weather conditions were fine and dry.

2.1.7 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 exterior of the building. Given the cream painted walls any urine stains would have been clearly visible if a roost had been present.
- 2.3.2 No cracks or crevices suitable for bat use were found in the external walls and no gaps could be seen under the roof tiles or lead-flashing. No gaps could be seen behind the barge boards. The window and door frames are well fitted and no potential roost sites were found.
- 2.3.3 The site is located in an area with good bat feeding habitat close to the property.
- 2.3.4 The Durham Bat Group holds a large number of records for the Durham City/Shincliffe area. The record search is based on O.S Grid Square NZ2940. Only records post 2000 have been included. **See Appendix**
There are no records for Bracken Cottage

2.4 SITE EVALUATION

- 2.4.1 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, behind the hanging tiles on the porch or under roofing materials.
- 2.4.2 There are other properties in the general area that could potentially provide bat roost sites and roosts are known from Shincliffe and High Shincliffe.
- 2.4.3 The immediate surrounding area provides good bat feeding habitat.

3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The proposed work to extend the house by changing a small area of the roof and extending the porch have 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 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 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) All roofing materials from the area of the roof where the new development is to be tied into the existing roof will be removed with care.
 - c) The door and window frames that need to be removed will be removed with care and should any gaps be found around the frames then these will be checked for the presence of bats by illuminating with a torch.
 - d) Any timber treatment in the roof area will use only 'bat friendly' products.

e) In the unlikely event of a bat or bats been found during building or roofing 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.

APPENDIX

The Durham Bat Group holds the following records for the Shincliffe area. The record search is based on O.S Grid Square NZ2940. Only records post 2000 have been included.

Grid Square	Date	Location	Species & No.	Activity
NZ2740	2007	Hollingside House, Hollingside Lane	15+ Brown long-eared Pipistrelle (No count)	Hibernation Hibernation
	2009	Hollingside House	28 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2010	Hollingside House	Brown long-eared, No count	Roost then
	2013	Hollingside House	8 Common pipistrelle 4 Soprano pipistrelle 26 <i>Myotis sp.</i> 32 Brown long eared	Roost then Roost then Roost then Roost then
	2013	Hollingside Lane/Great High Wood Mountjoy	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle	Flight Flight
	2013	Great High Wood	1 Common pipistrelle 1 Soprano pipistrelle	Flight Flight
	2014	Houghall Farm	Noctule	Flight
	2014	Houghall Pond	Brown long-eared	Flight
NZ2740/2840	2014	Houghall Lane	2+ Common pipistrelle <i>Myotis sp.</i>	Flight Flight
NZ2741	2002	54 Hallgarth Street, Durham	3+ Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2007	Quarry Heads Lane, Durham	8 Common pipistrelle 6 Brown long-eared <i>Myotis sp.</i>	Roost then Roost then Flight
	2008	St Mary's College, Durham	1 Common pipistrelle	Flight

	2008	Mountjoy Cottage	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2008	Dean's Office, South Lodge	Common pipistrelle 1 Soprano pipistrelle	Feeding Flight
	2009	Stockton Road, Durham	1 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2010	Prebend's Bridge, Durham	Common pipistrelle Daubenton's	Roost then Probable roost then
	2010	Library, St John's College	1 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2010	River Banks east of St John's College	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Brown long-eared	Flight Flight Flight
	2012	Prebend's Bridge	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Daubenton's 1, Species unknown	Feeding Feeding Feeding Roost then
	2013	Prebend's Bridge	1 Soprano pipistrelle	Feeding
	2014	Mountjoy Pond	Brown long-eared	Flight
	2014	West Court, St Mary's College	436 Soprano pipistrelle	Roost then
	2017	The Bungalow, Grey College	2 Common pipistrelle	Roost then, building demolished under license 2017
	2019	12a South Bailey, Durham	1 Common pipistrelle	Occasional roost then
	2019	13 South Bailey	1 Common pipistrelle	Occasional roost then
	2021	Grey College	Species unknown	Droppings found

NZ2642/2643/2742	2018	North Road Durham	1 Daubenton's	Grounded. Location not reported
NZ2741/2742	2012	Durham Cathedral Woodlands, River banks	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Daubenton's	Foraging Foraging Foraging
	2013	River banks, Durham	Noctule	Feeding
	2013	The Mill House, Durham	Common pipistrelle	A lot of bats foraging
	2015	Durham Chorister School	Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2015	River banks	Common pipistrelle Noctule Natterer's Daubenton's	Flight Flight Flight Flight
NZ2742	2001	South Street, Durham	Pipistrelle, no count	Roost then
	2002	Wanless Terrace, Durham	120+, Species unknown	No roost report
	2005	Kepier Court, Durham	Pipistrelle 2 Noctule	Foraging Commuting
	2006	Durham Cathedral	Noctule	Feeding
	2006	Disused church, The Sands	Species unknown	Droppings found
	2007	Freeman's Place, Durham	Noctule Daubenton's	Flight Flight
	2007	Old Elvet, Durham	1 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2008	Ferens Close, Durham	70+ Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2008	United Reform Church, Claypath	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2010	Old Elvet	1, Species unknown	Bat in building
	2010	Durham Castle	1, Species unknown	Bat in building

	2010	Claypath	Common pipistrelle	Foraging
	2010	Palladium Cinema, Claypath	Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2010	Former Palladium cinema	Common pipistrelle Noctule <i>Myotis sp.</i>	Feeding Feeding Feeding
	2010	Milburngate House, Durham	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2010/2011	Durham Cathedral	Multiple species	Roosts & foraging activity
	2011	Crossgate, Durham	Common pipistrelle <i>Myotis sp.</i>	Feeding Flight
	2011	Palace Green Library	2 Common pipistrelle	Roost
	2012	Durham Market Place	1 Common pipistrelle	Flight
	2012	North Bailey	Common pipistrelle	Feeding & commuting
	2012	Mill leat, Cathedral Woods	c. 14 Daubenton's	Roost then
	2012	Palace Green Library	Common pipistrelle	Feeding & commuting
	2013	Framwellgate Bridge	Daubenton's	Foraging
	2013	Prince Bishops' shopping centre	1 Common pipistrelle	Grounded
	2013	Arlington House, North Bailey	2 Common pipistrelle 3+ Soprano pipistrelle	Roost then Flight
	2013	Milburngate Bridge	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Daubenton's	Feeding Feeding Feeding
	2014	Central Durham riverside	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Daubenton's	Feeding Feeding Feeding

	2014	Freeman's Reach, Durham	2+ Common pipistrelle 1 Soprano pipistrelle 15 Daubenton's	Roost then Roost then Roost then
	2014	Milburngate House	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Noctule <i>Myotis sp.</i>	Feeding Flight Commuting Flight
	2015	Moneyers' Garth, Palace Green	Common pipistrelle	Commuting
	2016	Cloisters, Durham Cathedral	1 Soprano pipistrelle	Foraging
	2016	Sidegate, Durham	75 Common pipistrelle	Roost, also present in 2019
	2016	Exchequer Building, Palace Green	1 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2017	Cathedral river banks	1 Common pipistrelle	Foraging
	2018	Assembly Rooms, North Bailey	4 Common pipistrelle	Occasional roost then
	2018	Three Tuns Hotel, New Elvet	1+ Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2019	Chapel, Providence Row	1 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2019	Nave, Durham Cathedral	6. Species unknown	Flight
	2019	Prince Bishops' shopping centre	1 Brown long-eared	Grounded
	2020	Palace Green	1 Common pipistrelle	Grounded
	2020	Cloisters, Durham Cathedral	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle	Roost Roost

	2020	River Wear, near Fulling Mill, Durham	Daubenton's	Flight
	2020	Milburngate footbridge	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Nathusius pipistrelle Brandt's Daubenton's Noctule	Foraging Commuting Commuting Commuting Foraging Foraging
NZ2839	2010	Shincliffe Woods	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle 2+ Noctule <i>Myotis sp.</i> Daubenton's	Flight Flight Commuting Foraginglight
NZ2840	2007	Old Railway, Shincliffe	Daubenton's	Possible roost then
	2008	Shincliffe Hall area	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Daubenton's Brown long- eared	Feeding Flight Flight Flight
	2013	Great High Wood, Houghall	Pipistrelle	Flight
	2013	Houghall	Pipistrelle	Flight
NZ2841	2006	River Wear at Shuinlife Bridge	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2010	River Wear	Daubenton's	Feeding
	2010	Maiden Castle	Common pipistrelle in good numbers	Foraging
	2013	Near Houghall Collage	1 Noctule	Feeding
	2013	Great High Wood	1 <i>Myotis sp.</i>	Flight
	2016	River Wear	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Daubenton's	Flight Flight Flight

	2016	Great High Wood	Common pipistrelle Natterer's Brown long-eared	Flight Flight Flight
	2016	Whinney Hill School	1 Common pipistrelle	Occasional roost then
NZ2842	2006	River Wear	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2008	York Cottage, St Hild & Bede College	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
	2008	Prescription Pricing Authority, Green Lane Durham	173 Soprano pipistrelle	Roost then & present in 2010
	2008	103 Gilesgate	2 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2017	Pelaw Wood	88 Noctule	Roost then
	2018	Pelaw Wood & River Wear	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Whiskered or Brandt's Noctule Daubenton's	Flight Flight Flight Flight Flight
	2018	Chistopher Building. Hild & Bede college	36 Daubenton's	Maternity roost then
NZ2939/2948	2002	Whitwell Avenue, High Shincliffe	251 Common pipistrelle	Exclusion requested
	2005	Ancroft Garth, High Shincliffe	2 Pipistrelle	Flight
NZ2940	2002	Old Post Office, High Street South, Shincliffe	15+ Common pipistrelle	Roost then
	2007	Shincliffe	1 Whiskered	Dead
	2017	St Mary's Close, Shincliffe	5 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
NZ3041	2007	Sherburn Hospital	25+ Brown long-eared	Roost then Feeding

			Common pipistrelle	
	2007	Beck, Sherburn House	Common pipistrelle Daubenton's	Feeding Feeding

METHOD STATEMENT – BRACKEN COTTAGE, SHINCLIFFE

1. Objective - To maintain and protect the populations of bats in Shincliffe 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 building or roofing 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 building-
 - a) All roofing materials that need to be removed to allow the new extension roof to be tied in must be removed carefully by hand.
 - b) The door and window frames that need to be removed should be removed with care. If any cracks or crevices are found around the frames then these should be checked for the presence of bats by illuminating with a torch.
 - c) Any timber treatment in the roof area should use only 'bat friendly' products.
 - d) In the very unlikely event of a bat/bats been found during the building 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 property 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 held on site,