Oatlands *Ecology*

Consultant Ecologists

Initial Bat Scoping Report

6 Grange Terrace
Whorlton
Barnard Castle
DL12 8UY

December 2022

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1 Summary

1.1 Results

The house and out-buildings were considered to have:

- *A negligible potential to support bat roost.*

1.2 Recommendations

Further Surveys

No further surveys are recommended.

Working Methods

- Given the size of the property and the paucity of potential bat roosting features prior to the proposed works no mitigation measures are recommended.
- However, work to the roof should be conducted with care, with roof tiles, ridge tiles and flashing removed (if removal is to take place) by hand and checked for bats by the contractors.
- Should bats be observed, the roof tile / flashing should be replaced, works should cease and the Local Planning Authority or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) contacted for advice (BCT: 0345 1300 228).

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2 Introduction

2.1 Preamble

This report presents the results of the Initial Bat Scoping Survey at 6 Grange Terrace, Whorlton, Co Durham. It is intended to demonstrate a reasonable effort has been undertaken to ensure the presence, or otherwise, of a bat roost has been confidently ascertained and is intended to demonstrate that the LPA's obligations under the NERC Act 2006[1] and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will be met.

2.2 Site Location

The property subject to this report is 6 Grange Terrace, Whorlton, Barnard Castle, DL12 8UY.

OS Grid Reference: NZ 10578 15001.

2.3 Description of the Property

See Section 7 Photographs & Figure 1: Site Location

6 Grange Terrace is a small, single story terraced house located in the small village of Whorlton. At the time of the survey the house was unoccupied, in a state of some disrepair and undergoing internal refurbishment.

Whorlton is located 5km east of Barnard Castle within an open landscape of fields and pastures divided by hedges and tree lines.

There are several habitats of potentially high value for foraging and commuting bats in the immediate vicinity of the property.

- A thin deciduous woodland along Whorlton Beck - located ~100m east of the property - joins the woodland along the banks of the River Tees – a distance of ~500m.
- A mature deciduous woodland belt along Westwick Road – 30m west of the property – links to a small belt of trees which joins the woodland along the banks of the River Tees – a combined distance of 550m.

[1]The Duty is set out in Section 40 of the Act, and states that: "*Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity*"

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2.4 Outline of the Proposed Development

See Relevant Architect Drawings for Full Details

The proposed development will include:

- Conversion of the existing outhouse in the rear garden to create a small single bedroom with on-suite.
- Refurbishment of the interior of the house.

2.5 Details of the Surveyors Experience

The survey was conducted by Andrew Perry, B.Sc. (Hons), CEnv MCIEEM. He is a Chartered Environmentalist and a licensed bat ecologist[2] with over 18 year's professional ecological experience for a variety of developments including large commercial developments, large road and pipeline schemes throughout the UK as well as smaller residential surveys.

Andrew is an active member of the West Yorkshire Bat Group (Records Officer and Commercial Enquiries Officer) and a Natural England Volunteer Bat Warden.

2.6 Survey & Report Objectives

- To search for and identify features with the potential to support a bat roost and assess the potential of the property to support bats.
- To recommend further surveys which – if necessary - allow an accurate assessment of:
    - The type and location of any roost present.
    - The species and numbers of bats present.
    - The conservation significance of any bat roosts present roost and the likely impacts as a result of the development.

[2] Class Survey Licence – WML: CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2). Registration No.2015-11912-CLS-CLS.

3 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study / Consultations

The following organisations and information sources were contacted / used to collect and collate relevant ecological information.

- Environmental Records Information Centre – North East for existing bat roost records within 2km of the property.
- OS maps and publicly available aerial photography to identify relevant habitats and features within the vicinity of the site and their connectivity to potentially important foraging areas and landscape features.

3.2 Initial Bat Scoping Survey

An Initial Scoping Survey was conducted on 28th November 2022.

External Building Inspection

Features with the potential to allow bats entry to, and egress from the house and outbuildings such as gaps in the walls, beneath eaves, within roof/ ridge tiles, masonry and around window frames, were actively searched for.

High quality close focussing binoculars were used to inspect:

- The surfaces of all external walls and the ground at the foot of the walls.
- All exterior surfaces below eaves and gutters.
- All sheltered areas i.e., corners, behind pipes and areas of accumulated dust and webs.

Internal Building Inspection

The interior of the house (including the roof void) and the out-buildings in the rear garden was surveyed using a powerful LED head torch to ensure adequate illumination and a See Snake flexible endoscope (7mm camera width) to survey the interior of accessible gaps, holes and crevices where necessary.

Evidence of Bats

Evidence for bats was sought primarily in the form of bat droppings although evidence of urine staining on windows and scratch marks / smoothing beneath potential roost sites also searched for.

Assessment of Potential

The potential of the building to support bat roosts was considered using the surveyors' considerable experience and training and the criteria outlined in Appendix 1.

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4 Results

4.1 Desk Study

The Environmental Records Information Centre (North East) hold records of three bat roosts within the vicinity of the property. There are no records for 6 Grange Terrace itself.

Table 4.1: Bat Roost Records from Durham Bat Group

Bat Roost Records				
Record Type	**Species & numbers if provided**	**Location**	**Distance from property**	**Record date**
Roost	8 x pipistrelle species	Grange Terrace, Whorlton	75m north	2004
Maternity Roost	60 x Pipistrelle species	Whorlton – outside village close to River Tees	1.3km south-east	1997
Possible roost	1 x Common pipistrelle	Thorpe, Wyecliffe	1.7km south	2016

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4.2 Initial Bat Scoping Survey

See Section 7: Photographs

House: West (front) Elevation

- All brick work and pointing were in good condition with no gaps or holes suitable for bats observed as a result of displaced masonry or mortar.
- A small gap was observed at the top of the wall around an overflow pipe. This this gap was closely inspected from ladders using the endoscope and found to be shallow, clogged with aged webs and dust and considered un-suitable for bats.
- The gap between the walls and guttering was clogged with the remnants of very dense ivy with no gaps at the tops of the wall present.
- All roof and ridge tiles were in good condition with no missing or displaced tiles.

House: East (rear) Elevation

- All brick work and pointing were in good condition with no gaps or holes suitable for bats observed as a result of displaced masonry or mortar.
- All roof and ridge tiles were in good condition with no missing or displaced tiles.

House: Roof Void

- The roof void was un-converted with a bitumen felt roof lining.
- The masonry, pointing and timber roof frame was in good condition with no gaps, holes or cracks suitable for bats observed.
- The ridge beams and gaps between the gable end rafters and internal walls were inspected and were clogged with dense accumulations of webs and dust and considered un-suitable for bats.

Outhouses

- The exterior and interior brickwork and pointing was in good condition (with 2 of the outhouse interiors rendered with plaster) with no gaps or holes suitable for bats observed. The few small gaps present in the masonry were closely inspected with the endoscope and found to be shallow and sub-optimal for bats.
- The roof was constructed of unlined corrugated panels with no features suitable for bats present.

Evidence of Bats

All parts of property were fully accessible and, despite a thorough search, no evidence of bats was observed at any location.

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5 Interpretation

The house and outhouse supported very few features with the potential to support a bat roost. Features – such as gaps in the exterior and interior masonry of the outhouse – initially considered to have some potential for bats were discounted after close inspection due to being shallow and / or clogged with aged and dense accumulations of webs and dust.

Despite a thorough search of the property – including the roof void - no evidence of bats was observed during the survey.

It is considered highly likely that should a large maternity roost or smaller, non-breeding roost have been present,evidence of bats - such accumulations or small clusters of droppings in discrete locations on the external walls and windows and/or scattered droppings within the roof void - would have been present and easily observed during the survey. No such evidence was observed.

Given the findings of the Initial Bat Scoping Survey the property was considered to have:

- *A negligible potential to support a bat roost.*

6 Recommendations

6.1 Bats

Further Surveys

No further surveys are recommended.

Working Methods

- Given the size of the property and the paucity of potential bat roosting features prior to the proposed works no mitigation measures are recommended.
- However, should works impact the roof of the house, this should be conducted with care, with roof tiles, ridge tiles and flashing removed by hand and checked for bats by the contractors.
- Should bats be observed, the roof tile / flashing should be replaced, works should cease and the Local Planning Authority or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) contacted for advice (BCT: 0345 1300 228).

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7 Photographs

House: West (front) elevation	House: West (front) elevation. Hole around overflow pipe inspected with endoscope clogged with webs and dust
	
House: West (front) elevation. Space between wall and guttering clogged with remnants of dense ivy	House: West (front) elevation. Roof tiles in good condition
	

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House: East (rear) elevation. Pionting in good condition	House: East (rear) elevation. Roof tiles in good condition.
	
Roof viod. North internal wall with dense accumulations of webs and dust	Roof viod. South internal wall with dense accumulations of webs and dust
	
Roof viod. Roof frame and lining with dense accumulations of webs and dust	
	

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Outbuilding. Exterior. Pionting in good condition	Outbuilding. Exterior. Pionting in good condition
	
Outbuilding interior. Walls plastered and unlined corrugated roof panels	Outbuilding interior. Walls plastered
	
Outbuilding interior. Pionting in good condition and unlined corrugated roof panels	
	

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Figures

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Figure 1: Site Location
Site: 6 Grange Terrace, Whorlton

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Probability of a Site Being Used by Bats

Factors Affecting the Probable Value of Development Sites for Bats.

Value for bats	Features within or adjacent to the site
Lower  Higher	• No features likely to be used by bats (roosting, foraging or commuting) • No suitable foraging habitat • Small number of potential roost sites in buildings or trees (i.e., probably not maternity roost of hibernacula). • Isolated foraging habitat not connected to the wider landscape by linear features such as water courses, tree lines etc. • Site is close to known bat roosts. • Bats recorded or observed using an area for foraging of commuting close to a potential roost. • Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that could be used by commuting bats e.g., river valleys, streams or hedgerows. • High quality habitat for foraging bats e.g., broad laved woodland, tree lines watercourses and grazed parkland • Buildings or trees with many potential roost sites • Presence of structures with particular significance for roosting bats (e.g., mines, caves, tunnels, ice houses & cellars).
Confirmed Presence	• Evidence indicates that a building, tree or other structure is used by bats e.g. • Bats seen roosting or observed flying from a roost or freely in the habitat • Droppings, carcasses feeding remains etc. found • Bats heard “chattering” inside the roost on a warm day or at dusk.

Adapted from BCT. 2012. Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines BCT, London - Table 4.2 Page 24

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Assessing the Potential of Buildings to Support Bats in Summer

Likelihood of bats being present	Feature of the building or structure and its location
High bat roost potential  Negligible bat roost potential	• Pre 20th century / early 20th century structures and traditional stone / timber agricultural buildings • Large, complex buildings with large, unobstructed roof voids • Warm roof void - warmed by sun, boilers, heating pipes *etc* • Large (>20cm) roof timbers with mortice joints, cracks and holes. • High number of potential access points i.e., gaps / holes between masonry, under the eaves, in soffits and in the roof tiles and gable ends • Hanging tiles or wood cladding, esp. on south facing walls • Largely undisturbed structures / roof voids • Close or adjacent to suitable foraging habitat e.g., to water or woodland of linear features leading to foraging areas • Rural setting
	• Modern construction of steel and sheet materials • Modern well-maintained buildings with few potential access points • Cool, draughty, cluttered roof voids, with dense covering of webs and dust. • Active industrial setting or high levels of disturbance • Highly urbanised environment with few potential feeding areas close by • No adjacent commuting corridors / linear features to foraging areas • High levels of external lighting • No / few potential access points

Adapted from JNCC. 2004. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. JNCC, Peterborough - Table 5.1 Page 22 and BCT. 2016. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines BCT, London - Table 4.1 Page 35

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Appendix 2: Relevant Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 15 (74) of the NPPF states:

174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation and

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of *priority habitats*, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Bats

Under the combined legislation it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Deliberately (or recklessly) damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place (i.e., a roost)
- Deliberately (or recklessly) disturb bats in a way that would impair their ability -
  - i) to survive, breed or to rear or nurture their young
  - ii) to hibernate or migrate
  - iii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species

Under the Regulations damage or destruction to a roost is an 'absolute' offence (i.e., there are no defences under the law) and roosts are protected whether bats are present or not.

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