

**BAT SURVEY & RISK ASSESSMENT
FOR GRANGE GARTH
SEAHAM GRANGE FARM
SEAHAM**

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SUMMARY

- 1 The aim of the study was to survey the bungalow at Grange Garth, Seaham Grange Farm, Seaham in relation to its' potential to support a bat roost. The proposal is to extend the building by converting the loft space into living accommodation. The building is presently unoccupied but has been heated over the colder months of the year.
- 2 A daylight survey and risk assessment was carried out in July 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 bungalow or in the loft space.
- 4 There is reasonable feeding habitat in the area, but the building stands on an exposed site.
- 5 The property is considered a 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 are no potential access points for bats into the loft space, though it would be suitable for bat use.
- 6 The proposed conversion of the loft space to living accommodation 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 building work to ensure no accidental harm to bats.
8. An integral bat box will be erected on the west gable of the building to encourage an increase in biodiversity in the area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This risk assessment and report were commissioned by Fitz Architects on behalf of the new owner of the property, in July 2022.

The aim of the study was to survey the bungalow at Grange Garth, Seaham Grange Farm, Seaham in relation to its' potential to support a bat roost. The proposal is to extend the building by converting the large loft space into living accommodation.

1.2 The building is presently unoccupied but has been heated over the colder months of the year.

Site description (See photos)

1.3 Grange Garth is a brick-built bungalow with a pitched, lined tile roof. The exterior walls are rendered and painted. There is a conservatory abutting onto the rear elevation of the building.

1.4 The building in a very good state of repair with no cracks or crevices in the exterior walls and no gaps beneath the roofing tiles. No crevices were found in the external chimney stack. The barge boards and guttering are modern PVC and well fitted and sealed where the barge board meets the external wall so there are no gaps behind them. The window and door frames are modern and no gaps could be seen around the frames.



Front and side elevations



Rear elevation



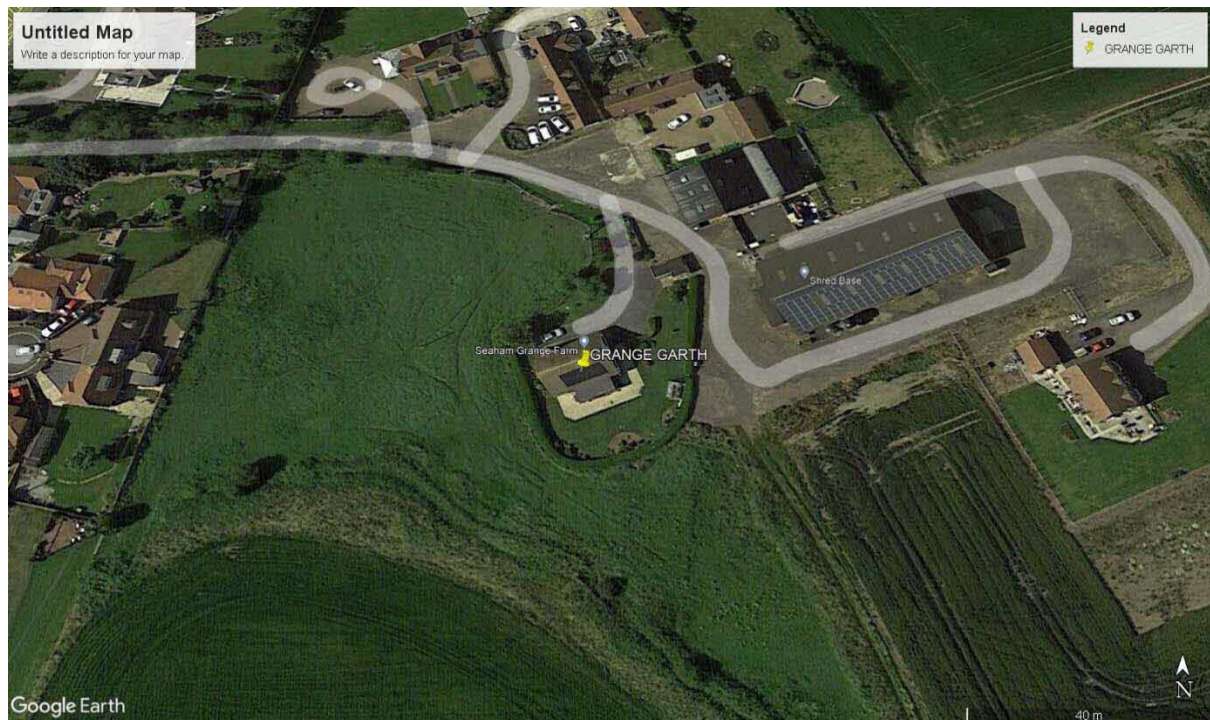
West Gable



Wall top – sealed

Surrounding Area (See aerial photo below)

- 1.5 The building is surrounded by a large garden, mainly laid to lawn with a few small trees. There is open farmland to the south and east and housing to the north and west. The site lies close to the north-east coast and stands on an exposed site.



2. METHODOLOGY

Methods

- 2.1.1 The daylight survey involved checking the exterior of the building and the loft space 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 and the loft space 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 32 years and holds a protected species scientific license.

2.1.6 Timing

The site survey and assessment were carried out on 27th July 2022 during the bat breeding 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 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 a bat uses 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 or in the loft space.
- 2.3.2 No potential roost sites were found. There are no cracks or crevices in the exterior walls or at the wall tops. No gaps could be seen under the roof tiles or at the roof edges. No potential access points could be seen into the loft space as the roof lining is intact and the roof edges are sealed.
- 2.3.3 The site is located in an area with reasonable bat feeding habitat, as there are some mature trees in the grounds of properties to the north and west. However, the property is located close to the coast in an exposed location.
- 2.3.4 The Durham Bat Group holds the following records for the Seaham area.

Grid Square	Date	Location	Species	Activity
NZ3949	2006	Seaton Town Farm	1 Brown Long-eared Common pipistrelle <i>Myotis sp</i> , Noctule	Roost then Foraging Foraging Commuting
	2011	Seaton, Seaham	1 Part-coloured bat	Grounded
NZ3949/3950	2006	Lynwood, Seaton	Species unknown	Roost then
NZ4048	2016	Dalton Heights, Seaham	Species unknown	Flight
NZ4049	2007	Green Heights, Seaham	Pipistrelle?	Roost then
NZ4051	1996	Cherry Knowle Hospital	Pipistrelle?	Feeding
NZ4052	2005	Ryhope Engine Museum	Common pipistrelle	Feeding
NZ4148	2004	Castle Dene, Dalton-le-Dale	6 Common pipistrelle	Roost then
NZ4150	2007	Woodlands, Seaham	60? Species unknown	Transient roost then
NZ4151	2005	Ryhope Dene, Railway tunnel	Common pipistrelle	Feeding in tunnel
	1996	Neasham Road, Seaham	33 Pipistrelle	Roost then

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 evidence of bats using loft space. The loft space is large and would provide a suitable roost site for those species that prefer a more open roost site, but there are no potential access points.
- 2.4.2 There are other properties to the west and north that could potentially provide bat roost sites.
- 2.4.3 The surrounding area provides reasonable bat feeding habitat particularly to north and west, but the building is located on an exposed site with little feeding habitat close to it.

3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The proposed work to convert the loft space to living accommodation has a negligible risk of having a negative impact on any bat species 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.

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 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) Where the existing roofing materials need to be removed, they will be removed with care; the tiles will be removed by hand.
 - c) Any timber treatment in the roof area will use only 'bat friendly' chemicals and any new timber in the roof area will only have been treated with similar products.

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.
- 4.3 An integral bat box will be fitted to the south-west gable wall near the wall top to provide a potential roost site.

METHOD STATEMENT – GRANGE GARTH, SEAHAM GRANGE

1. Objective - To maintain and protect the populations of bats in Seaham 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 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 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) Where the existing roofing materials need to be removed, they should be removed with care; the tiles should be removed by hand.
 - b) Any timber treatment in the roof area must use only 'bat friendly' chemicals and any new timber in the roof area must only have been treated with similar products.
 - c) In the very unlikely event of a bat/bats been found during 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.
 - d) 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.