

**BAT RISK ASSESSMENT
FOR 'BADACHRO'
STEPPEY LANE
LESBURY**

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SUMMARY

- 1 The aim of the study was to survey the property known as 'Badachro' in Steppey Lane, Lesbury, Northumberland for its potential to support a bat roost. The building is to be demolished and a new house built on the site. The house is unoccupied at present and unheated over the colder months of the year.
- 2 A daylight survey and risk assessment was carried out in late January 2023 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 house or extension.
- 4 There is good bat feeding habitat in the Lesbury area.
- 5 The house and extension are in a good state of repair and no potential roost sites were found for crevice dwelling bats in the exterior walls around the door or window frames or at the wall tops. No gaps could be seen under the roof pantiles. There is no loft space in the house or extension that could be used by bats. The building is assessed as very unlikely to support a bat roost or hibernation site.
There are a number other properties of various ages and construction in the Steppey Lane area that could potentially provide bat roost sites.
- 6 The proposal to demolish the house 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.
Mitigation measures will be put in place to prevent any accidental harm to bats. The addition of an integral bat box as part of the proposed development will aim to have a positive impact on bats by providing a new potential roost site.
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.
8. To encourage an increase in biodiversity and increase the potential for bats to roost in the area, an integral bat box will be fitted to the east elevation of the new house.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This risk assessment and report were commissioned by Fitz Architects on behalf of the owner of the property, in January 2023.
The aim of the study was to survey the property known as ‘Badachro’ in Steppey Lane, Lesbury, Northumberland for its potential to support a bat roost. The building is to be demolished and a new house built on the site.
- 1.2 The building is unoccupied at present and unheated over the colder months of the year.

Site description (See photos)

- 1.3 The building is two-storey, brick built with the two gable walls, the rear elevation and part of the front elevation being rendered. It has a pantile roof. The front elevation appears to be single storey with dormer windows set into the roof and the rear elevation two-storey, this is because the house is built into a sloping bank. There is a small extension built onto the southern gable end, this has a different roof height to the main house. It is brick built with rendered walls and a pitched pantile roof. As with the main house there is no loft space as the living accommodation extends into the roof area. It has skylight windows set into the rear elevation.
- 1.4 From the perspective of the building’s potential to support a bat roost, the exterior of the building is in a good state of repair. There are no cracks or crevices in the brickwork or rendering and no gaps at the wall tops. The roofs of the main house and extension are in a good state of repair.



Front elevation showing dormer window



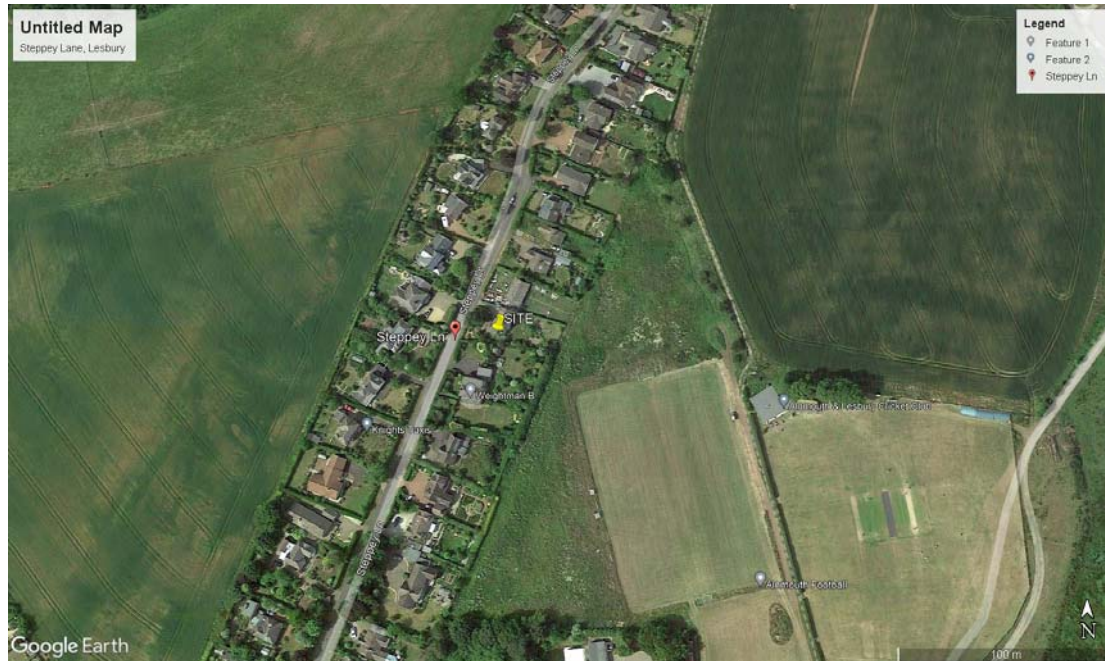
Rear elevation



Rear elevation – extension on southern side

1.5 **Surrounding Habitat (See aerial photo below)**

The house is located in Steppey Lane which lies just to the south of Lesbury and to the south of the River Aln. There are further properties on either side, a small access road to the west and open farmland to the east. There are trees in the gardens of local properties, on some field boundaries and along the banks of the Aln.



2. METHODOLOGY

Methods

- 2.1.1 The daylight survey involved checking the exterior of the house for signs of bats, to identify potential roost sites and to assess the state of repair of the exterior. Given the state of repair of the building and the lack of potential for the building to be used 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 are unlikely to persist over the winter period unless the exterior wall is very well sheltered, and are far less likely to be found during winter surveys on exteriors of buildings.
- 2.1.3 There were no cracks and crevices around the window frames and door frames or in the exterior walls or at the wall tops that required checking with an endoscope.

Risk Assessment

- 2.1.4 All of the building could be checked for signs of bat use. No Constraints. Weather conditions were fine and dry.

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 31st January 2023 during the bat hibernation period.

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.
- 2.3.2 No potential roost sites for crevice dwelling bats were identified. No cracks or crevices were found in any of the exterior walls, around the window or door frames or at the wall tops. Most of the fitting are modern PVC except for the window in the front elevation, but there were no gaps around this window frame. There are no loft spaces in the house or extension that could be used by bats as the living accommodation extends into the roof areas. A thin covering of ivy covers one corner of the extension, but it is very unlikely to provide a roost site for bats or a bird nest site.
- 2.3.3 The site is located on an area with good bat feeding habitat with mature trees in the grounds of local properties and the River Aln to the north of the site.
- 2.3.4 A record search was commissioned in January 2023 from the North-east Environmental Information Centre (ERIC), these records include those held by Northumberland Bat Group. The following are the records for the Lesbury area. (The most recent records for each species have been listed below) There are no records for the site

Species	Activity	Date	Location	Grid Ref.	Distance from site
<i>Myotis sp.</i>	Flight	2020	Garden Cottage	NU235116	155m
Daubenton's Bat	Foraging	2014	Lesbury	NU2311	
Daubenton's Bat	Roost	2000	Greyhurst	NU230120	778m
Whiskered/Brandt's	Roost (49 bats)	2009	Hipsburn	NU2320	
Whiskered/Brandt's	Foraging	2014	Lesbury	NU2311	
Natterer's Bat	Foraging	2014	Lesbury	NU2311	
Noctule	Flight	2020	The Cottage, Lesbury	NU236116	151m
Common pipistrelle	Flight	2002	Lesbury	NU2311	
Common pipistrelle	Roost	2000	Greyhurst, Alnmouth	NU230120	778m
Common pipistrelle	Flight	2020	The Cottage, Lesbury	NU236116	151m
Common pipistrelle	Roost	2000	Lealands, Lesbury	NU234117	264m
Common pipistrelle	Flight	2020	Garden Cottage	NU235116	155m
Common pipistrelle	Roost	2015	Lesbury House	NU235115	282m

Soprano pipistrelle	Flight	2020	The Cottage,	NU236116151	151m
Soprano pipistrelle	Roost	2015	Lesbury House	Nu235115	282m
Brown long-eared	Flight	2020	Garden Cottage	NU235116	155m
Brown long-eared	Roost	2020	Lesbury	NU2311	

2.3.5 The records show bat activity close to the site but no roost records. As there is no systematic surveying for bat roosts in Northumberland, this should not be taken to indicate there are no roosts in Steppey Lane.

2.4 SITE EVALUATION

- 2.4.1 The house and extension are in a good state of repair and no potential roost sites were found for crevice dwelling bats in the exterior walls around the door or window frames or at the wall tops. No gaps could be seen under the roof pantiles. There is no loft space in the house or extension that could be used by bats. A thin covering of ivy covers one corner of the extension and into the guttering, but it is very unlikely to provide a roost site for bats or a bird nest site. The building is assessed as very unlikely to support a bat roost or hibernation site.
- 2.4.2 There are a number other properties of various ages and construction in the Stepney Lane area that could potentially provide bat roost sites.
- 2.4.3 The site is located on an area with good bat feeding habitat and four species of bat, common and soprano pipistrelle, whiskered/Brandt's and Daubenton's bat, that are known to use roost sites in buildings, have been recorded in the Lesbury area. (Noctule bats habitually use tree roosts). However, this property does not provide potential roost or hibernation sites

3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The proposal to demolish the house 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.
Mitigation measures will be put in place to prevent any accidental harm to bats. The addition of an integral bat box as part of the proposed development will aim to have a positive impact on bats by providing a new potential roost site.
- 3.2 There is always a very small possibility of a bat/bats being found during any 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 Given it is a known that bats occur in the general area, the following 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 roof of the house and extension will be stripped by hand. This to include the pantiles and the roof linings.
 - c) The window and door frames will be removed with care prior to the walls being taken down. If any gaps are found around any of the frames these will be checked for the presence of bats before the frame is removed by illuminating the gap using a small 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 To encourage an increase in biodiversity and increase the potential for bats to roost in the area, an integral bat box will be fitted to the east elevation of the new house. (See architects drawing).

METHOD STATEMENT – ‘BADACHRO’, STEPPEY LANE, LESBURY

1. Objective - To maintain and protect the populations of bats in Lesbury area
2. Though the main house and extension have been assessed as very unlikely to support a bat roost, it is known that bats occur in the Lesbury 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 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) The roofs of the house and extension must be stripped by hand. This to include the pantiles and the roof linings.
 - b) The window and door frames should be removed with care prior to the walls being taken down. If any gaps are found around any of the frames these should be checked for the presence of bats before the frame is removed by illuminating the gap using a small torch.
 - c) The shell of the building should be allowed to stand overnight before the walls are taken down.
 - d) 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 buildings 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 kept on site.