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Bat Risk Assessment of:
Lark House
Cornsay
Durham
DH7 9EP

Prepared for:
Wakefields Chartered Building Surveyors

On behalf of:
Graeme and Karen Thompson
Lark House
Cornsay
Durham
DH7 9EP

Report Ref: Wakefields_LarkHouse_Bat1.1

Report prepared by	**Position**	**Date**
David Anderson BSc (Hons)	Graduate Ecologist	12/12/2023
Report verified by	**Position**	**Date**
Barry Anderson MCIEEM MArborA	Director	12/12/2023

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0.1 Dendra Consulting Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake a bat risk assessment of Lark House, Cornsay, Durham. The report was required as part of a planning application to demolish an existing dwellinghouse, to allow for the building of a new dwellinghouse and separate double garage.

1.0.2 From the desk study it can be seen that the property is located close to low to moderate quality foraging opportunities. The bat records for the surrounding 1km are small in number and indicate a variety of species, however there were no records from the property itself.

1.0.3 The building is mainly well sealed but has gaps between the facia boards and building on the east and west elevations. Internally there were gaps amongst the stone work inside the roof void. There was no evidence, internally or externally, that bats were using the buildings as a roost.

1.0.4 On the balance of the evidence collected our conclusion is that the building has a negligible potential for housing a maternity colony, but does have the potential to provide roosting opportunities for hibernating bats.

1.0.5 Works to demolish the building must be undertaken outside of the hibernation period of November to March inclusive. The upper section of the wall should be demolished by hand.

1.0.6 The installation of an integrated bat box has been recommended.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of Report

2.1.1 Dendra Consulting Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake a bat risk assessment of Lark House, Cornsay, Durham. The report was required as part of a planning application to demolish an existing dwellinghouse, to allow for the building of a new dwellinghouse and separate double garage. The purpose of the survey and report were to:

- Undertake a risk assessment of the building with regards to potential bat usage.
- Assess the potential for the updated proposals to affect bats.
- Advise on any further survey work, if required.
- Formulate an appropriate mitigation strategy, if required.

2.2 Details of Proposals

2.2.1 The property currently comprises a two-storey detached house with a small single storey extension on both the east and west elevations.

2.2.2 It is proposed to demolish the existing dwellinghouse and replace it with a new dwellinghouse and separate double garage.

2.3 Survey Timing, Methodology & Personnel

2.3.1 A building inspection was conducted on 6th December 2023 by Barry Anderson. Barry is an experienced ecologist holding a Natural England Level 2 Bat Survey Class Licence (WML-CL18) and full membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM). The purpose of the visit was to assess the buildings' suitability for bats, signs of bats and potential entry/exit points. The survey was conducted in accordance with best practice guidelines (Collins, 2016). The weather on the day of the visit was fine and dry.

2.4 Legislation

2.4.1 All UK species of bat are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019. This law makes it illegal to:

- Deliberately capture, injure, or kill a bat
- Deliberately disturb a bat [*]
- Damage or destroy a bat roost or resting place

[*] Disturbance of bats includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to:

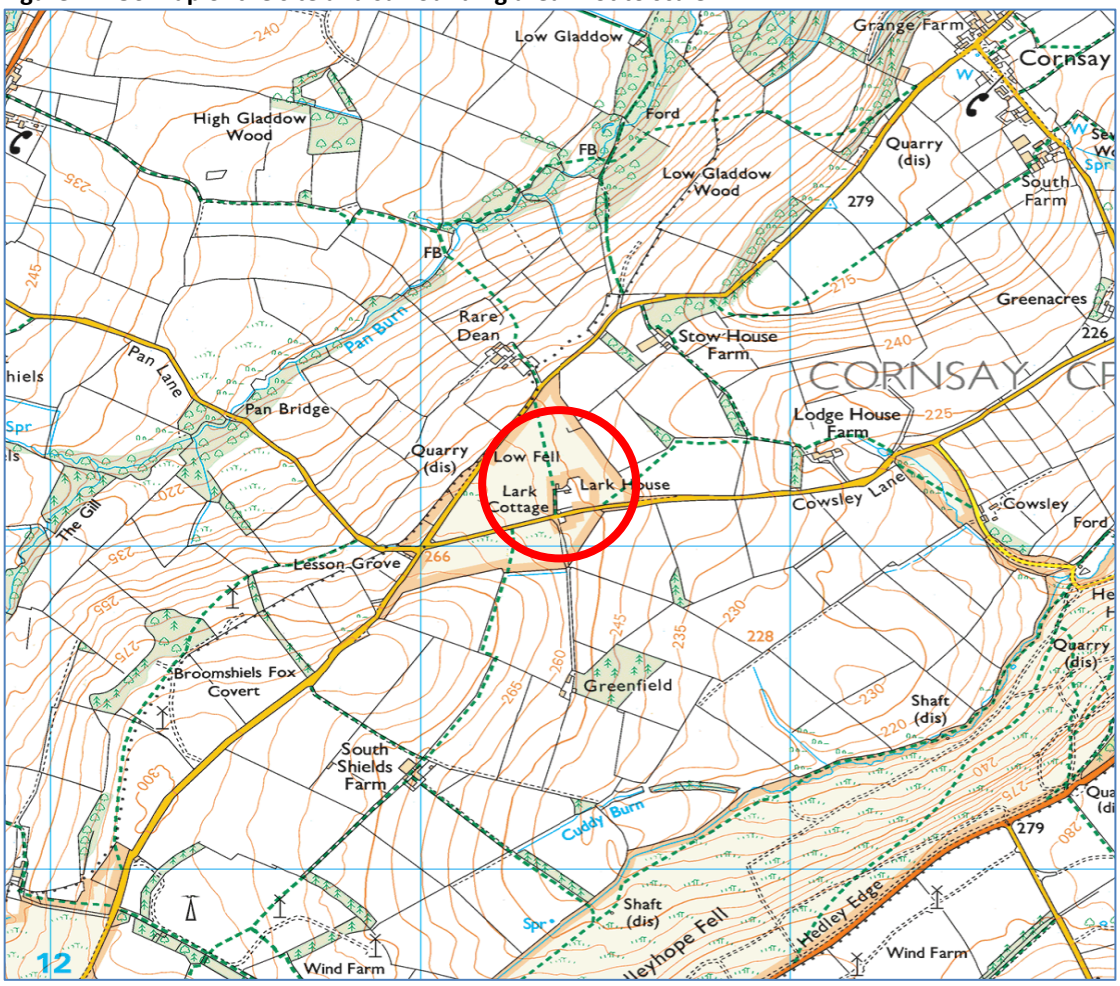
- Impair their ability
  - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
  - to hibernate or migrate
- Significantly affects the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

3.0 REPORT FINDINGS

3.1 Site Location and Surrounding Area

3.1.1 The property is located in a rural setting, in Cornsay, Durham. The grid reference is NZ 1337 4216. The property is surrounded by open fields and farmland. Small copses of trees are located south and east of the property, ranging between 200m and 500m away. The nearest true woodland is located approximately 840m west of the property. The nearest body of water is located approximately 570m south near Greenfield Lodge Cattery. The lack of hedgerows and connectivity between waterways and woodland means overall, the property is located in an area with low to moderate quality foraging opportunities for bats. Figure 1 shows the site location and surrounding area.

Figure 1 – OS map of the site and surrounding area. Not to scale.



3.2 Pre-Existing Information

3.2.1 Data held by the Environmental Records Centre (NE) revealed a small number of bat records for the surrounding 1km. The data set included common pipistrelle, noctule and whiskered bat species. The closest record is of 6 noctule bats feeding 320m east of the property, recorded in 2011. There are no records from the property itself.

3.3 Status of Bat Species

3.3.1 The status of bat species found within County Durham are provided in figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Status of species recorded in the search area.

Species	**Local status** (<1km – from data searches)	**County Status – Durham** (NEENP)	**National Status** (BCT 2023)
Brandt's bat	Not recorded	Rare and roosts in the Durham area are of national importance.	Stable
Brown long-eared bat	Not recorded	Reasonably widespread.	Stable
Common pipistrelle	Present	Ubiquitous throughout the whole of the County.	Increasing
Daubenton's bat	Not recorded	Widespread along water courses.	Stable
Nathusius' pipistrelle	Not recorded	Present but no roost sites known	No population trend data available
Natterer's bat	Not recorded	One of Durham's rarer species	Increasing
Noctule	Present	Localised in the area's mature woodland in rural areas.	Stable
Soprano pipistrelle	Not recorded	Widespread.	Increasing
Whiskered bat	Present	Widespread but localised. Roosts in the Durham area are of national importance	Stable

3.4 Building Inspection

3.4.1 Lark House is a detached, two-storey building. The building is a former residential property and is currently being soft stripped and dismantled in preparation for demolition (Photograph 1).

3.4.2 The property had a pitched roof, covered with slates. The ridge tiles were in good condition and sealed the roof well. The roof appeared to be in good condition. The lead flashing around the base of the chimney stacks was tight to the chimney and roof (Photograph 2). The south gable was mostly rendered, where rendering was absent the pointing between the brickwork was good (Photograph 3). The north side gable was fully rendered (Photograph 4). The east elevation was partially rendered, and the guttering was attached to the stonework via wooden facia boards. There is also a small, single-storey extension with a flat roof on the east elevation (Photograph 5). The wooden facia boards were not sealed well to the main building with several large gaps visible (Photographs 6 and 7). The wooden facias were sealed well to the single-storey extension. The west elevation was fully rendered with a small, pitched roof single storey extension (Photograph 8). Gaps were visible under the main building west elevation (Photograph 9). Externally, there was no evidence of use by bats, such as droppings, fur-oil staining, scratch marks or feeding remains.

3.4.3 A number of outbuildings were present on the site and are shown on the location plans. None of these buildings interfered with the proposals so are not mentioned elsewhere in this report.

3.4.4 Internally, the building is not currently being used as a residential property and is partially dismantled (Photograph 1). The roof void has a king post, purlin and rafter construction and the gable ends are well sealed on the inside (Photograph 10). The back of the slate roof was well covered by a breathable membrane and lots of cobwebs were visible on the purlins and rafters (Photograph 11). Gaps were visible inside the roof void on the inside of the

north gable stone work (Photograph 12). There was no evidence of use by bats, such as droppings, fur-oil staining, scratch marks, squeaking, feeding remains or live or dead bats.

Photograph 1 – Soft stripping and dismantling inside Lark House.

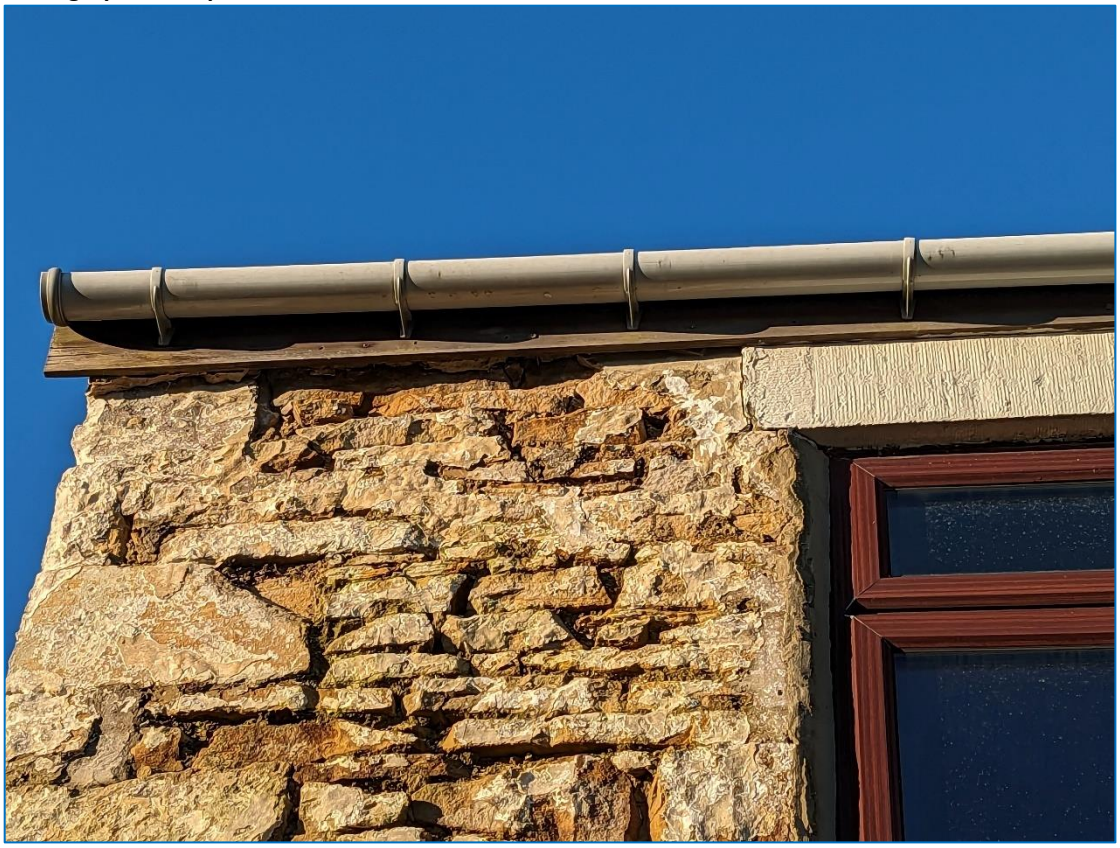
Photograph 2 – Pitched slate roof and lead flashing round chimney bases.

Photograph 3 – South gable mostly rendered and good pointing underneath roof slates.

Photograph 4 – North gable rendering.

Photograph 5 – East elevation with single-storey extension.

Photograph 6 – Gaps under east elevation facia boards.



Photograph 7 – More gaps under east elevation facia boards.

Photograph 8 – West elevation with single-storey, pitched roof extension.

Photograph 9 – Gaps under west elevation facia boards.

Photograph 10 – King post roof void and inside of south gable.

Photograph 11 – Breathable slate roof lining and cobwebs in roof void.

Photograph 12 – Gaps on inside of north gable stone work.

4.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Limitations

4.1.1 The risk assessment was undertaken by an experienced surveyor in accordance with best practice guidelines (Collins, 2016) outside of the optimal time of year. Although no evidence of use of the property by roosting bats was noted, a lack of physical evidence of bat use is not conclusive of a lack of roosting bats, and bat roosts remain protected throughout the year, including periods during which they are not occupied. Bats may move between several roosts depending on metabolic and social requirements (Mitchell-Jones 2004) and therefore may not be resident at a particular roost at the time of survey.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 From the desk study it can be seen that the property is located within low to moderate quality foraging opportunities. The bat records for the surrounding 1km are small in number and indicate a variety of species, however there were no records from the property itself.

4.2.2 The building roof was well sealed in terms of exterior gable end pointing but not well sealed around the east and west elevation guttering facia boards. There were also gaps present among the roof void stone work on the north gable. The gaps behind the east and west elevation facia boards could provide access to the gaps present among the roof void stone work. There was no evidence, internally or externally, that bats were using the buildings as a roost.

4.2.3 On the balance of the evidence collected our conclusion is that the building has a negligible potential for housing a maternity colony but does have the potential to provide roosting opportunities for hibernating bats. This is due to the presence of gaps behind the facia boards on the east and west elevations coupled with the gaps among the stone work inside the roof void. Although no evidence of bat usage was found we recommend a precautionary approach to

the dismantling and demolition of the building in terms of timing the proposed work.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0.1 The works to demolish the building will not be undertaken during the hibernation period of November to March inclusive.

5.0.2 The works to remove and demolish the stone work at the upper level, the roof void, will be done by hand and with extreme care in the event that non-hibernating bats are roosting in the gaps. Stones around gaps will be carefully removed and checked for bats before being discarded. New exposed surfaces will be checked carefully for bats as the works progress. If bats are found at any time during the works, the emergency procedures below (para 5.0.3) will be followed.

5.0.3 If at any time during the works bats are found, the following emergency procedures will be followed:

- Work will stop and the consultant will be contacted immediately – Barry Anderson 07900894160/0191 3719636.
- If the roost is still intact, or can be repaired, this should be done immediately with bats left *in situ*.
- Any injured bats, and bats which cannot be returned to the roost and may be vulnerable to inclement weather and/or predation, should be collected using gloved hands and placed into a suitable container with breathing holes.
- **Anyone bitten by a bat should seek immediate medical attention from their GP.**

5.0.4 It is recommended that a single integrated bat box is installed into the wall of the property on the east or west gable ends, near the apex. The box should be installed as high as possible and, if possible, not directly above doors or windows. Suitable examples are provided in figure 3.

Figure 3 – Examples of integrated bat boxes

	**Vivara pro Woodstone Bat Tube** • External dimensions: 21cm x 50cm x 7.7cm (W x H x D) • Internal dimensions: 16cm x 40cm x 2.2cm (W x H x D) (x2 cavities) • Weight: 6kg • Material: Woodstone
	**Schwegler 1FR Bat Tube** • Height: 47.5cm • Width: 20cm • Depth: 12.5cm • Entrance dimensions: 15 x 9 x 2cm • Weight: 9.8kg • Material: Woodcrete with integrated wooden pane
	**Habibat bat box** • Dimensions: 215 mm wide x 440 mm high x 102 mm deep • Material: Concrete plus plain facing (for rendering over) • Weight: approximately 8kg

6.0 REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust (2023) *The National Bat Monitoring Programme Annual Report 2022.* Bat Conservation Trust, London. Available at https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/reports/nbmp-annual-report

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)*. Bat Conservation Trust. London. ISBN-13 978-1-872745-96-1.

Mitchell-Jones A. J., (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.

North East England Nature Partnership

Last available at:

https://neenp.org.uk/natural-environment/biodiversity-priorities/

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https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/579/contents/made

Accessed 12th December 2023

Report end