

**Bat Survey Report**  
**Hepworth Sports Club, Hepworth.**  
3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015



**Prepared by:**

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## **1. Report summary**

- 1.1 The bat survey was commissioned by the architect Neville Fuller on behalf of the owner of the property.
- 1.2 The preliminary roost assessment survey was conducted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015 followed by a dusk emergence survey on the same day.
- 1.3 There were no visible signs of bat presence found in the building and the only bat roost feature was a section of roof with bitumen hessian felt beneath the slates. The building was therefore assessed as having low bat roost potential.
- 1.4 The activity surveys confirmed that no bats were roosting in the building subject to the planning application.
- 1.5 It was concluded that a European Protected Species licence is not required and no further survey effort is necessary.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 The Building is subject to a planning application and subsequent change of use. Middleton Ecological Consultancy was therefore contracted initially to conduct a baseline assessment to confirm presence of bats and to identify roost locations, access points, species present, level of use and the importance of nearby landscape features. This report confirms the findings of the survey carried out by one/two surveyors.

## **3. Site description**

- 3.1 The site consists of a relatively old (1852) both single and two story building formerly built as a school but presently used as a sports club. The small complex of buildings are built of stone and are situated on Towngate at Hepworth (see plate 2). The two storey part of the building has a single ridge and gables with a roof covering of welsh slate whilst the single storey section that is sandwiched between the two story building and number 58 Towngate has a single ridge and a roof covering of York stone slates. Additionally, there is a single story annex on the north elevation with a sloping roof and York stone slates (see plate 2).

### **3.2 Habitat assessment**

- 3.2.1 The surrounding area is predominantly a mixture of residential and farm buildings together with grassland. The surrounding habitat provides good habitat for bats therefore all of the locally occurring species are likely to be in the area. Table 1 outlines the habitats present, adjacent to and further afield to Hepworth Sports Club (see plate 1).

**Table 1**

|                                                                     |         |                |                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Name and address: Hepworth Sports Club, Towngate, Hepworth HD9 1TE. |         |                |                             |
| OS Grid Ref. SE 1635 0670                                           |         | Altitude. 249m |                             |
| Local Planning Authority: Kirklees                                  |         |                |                             |
| Features on site and adjacent to site                               |         |                |                             |
| Feature                                                             | On site | Adjacent       | Comments                    |
| Buildings                                                           | ✓       | ✓              |                             |
| River bordered by trees                                             |         | ✓              | New Mill Dyke 250m east     |
| Standing water                                                      |         |                |                             |
| Bridges tunnels and culverts                                        |         | ✓              |                             |
| Trees                                                               | ✓       | ✓              | At rear of building         |
| Woodland                                                            |         |                | 200m west                   |
| Grassland                                                           | ✓       | ✓              | Extensive in all directions |

**Plate 1**                      **Hepworth Sports Club**



### **3.3 Aims of survey**

3.3.1 The survey was conducted to find out the following:

- The presence of bats.
- Where in the buildings are bats likely to roost.
- Where bats are likely to enter and exit.
- Whether additional survey work is required.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Field survey**

4.1.1 The following personnel conducted the surveys:

Surveyors: Peter Middleton (WML-A34-level 2; 2015-11028-CLS-CLS)  
Carl Dixon

4.1.2 The following activities were carried out during the surveys.

- A brief inspection and assessment of the site and habitats present to within 300m.
- An extensive examination of all parts of the buildings both inside and out to record structural features and condition and to record features that may be suitable for roosting bats.
- A thorough search of all sections of the inside of the buildings for the presence or evidence of roosting bats including droppings, scratch marks and staining.
- Activity survey in the form of a single emergence survey on the building beginning 15 minutes before sunset and finishing 75 minutes after sunset.

4.1.3 The following equipment was at hand or used during the surveys:

- Cluelite
- Binoculars
- Ladder
- Bat detectors (Ipad & EM Touch, Batbox duet)
- Digital recorder

- Camera
- Thermometer
- Endoscope

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Desk survey

**Desk survey** - Data supplied by West Yorkshire Bat Group for a 2km radius of site.

**Table 2**

| Grid Ref     | Location Name                                                              | Date       | Common Name             | Abundance          | Record Type        |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| SE17650566   | 1 Latham Barn, Victoria                                                    | 21/05/2012 | Noctule                 | 1 Count of Adult   | aural bat detector |
| SE1460607543 | 99 Dunford Road, Holmfirth, Kirklees                                       | 07/06/2005 | Pipistrelle Bat species | 19 Count of Adult  | Roost              |
| SE16210815   | Wildspur Mills, New Mill, Holmfirth HD9 7BA                                | 01/06/2012 | Pipistrelle Bat species | >50 Count          | Roost (maternity)  |
| SE1719107788 | 1 Nettleton Terrace Huddersfield HD5 9TD                                   | 01/04/2011 | Common Pipistrelle      | 5 Count of Adult   | Roost              |
| SE17650566   | 1 Latham Barn, Victoria                                                    | 21/05/2012 | 45 Khz Pipistrelle      | 1 Count of Adult   | aural bat detector |
| SE17650566   | 1 Latham Barn, Victoria                                                    | 21/05/2012 | 55 Khz Pipistrelle      | 1 Count of Adult   | aural bat detector |
| SE1633606983 | 15 Kemp's Way, Holmfirth, HD9 1HZ, Kirklees                                | 10/05/2004 | Pipistrelle Bat species | 50 Count of Adult  | Roost              |
| SE16360699   | 9 Kemp's Way, Hepworth, Holmfirth, HD9 1HZ, Kirklees                       | 21/05/2004 | Pipistrelle Bat species | 1 Count of Adult   | Casualty           |
| SE1633606983 | 15 Kems Way, Hepworth                                                      | 12/08/2006 | Pipistrelle Bat species |                    | Roost              |
| SE17280507   | Kirklees, Upper Nabb Farm, Bedding Edge Road, Hepworth, Holmfirth, HD7 1PP | 27/04/2000 | Vesper Bat species      | 2 Count of Adult   | field record       |
| SE1640406987 | 4 Kemp's way, Hepworth, Kirklees                                           | 08/07/2003 | Vesper Bat species      |                    | Roost              |
| SE16350663   | 65 Towngate, Hepworth                                                      | 01/09/2014 | Noctule                 | 1 Count of adult   | Foraging           |
| SE16350663   | 65 Towngate, Hepworth (barn)                                               | 01/09/2014 | Natterer's              | 2 + Count of adult | Roost              |

## 5.2 Preliminary daytime assessment

- 5.2.1 The buildings were internally and externally inspected for bats using a high powered lamp where necessary. The potential of the buildings to accommodate bats was assessed along with a search for signs (e.g. droppings, moth wings, scratch marks, staining etc) or bats that were present. Particular attention was paid to any crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps between beams and joists and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below beams, among a number of other factors and signs indicative of a bat roost.

## 5.3 Outside inspection of building

- 5.3.1 The walls of the buildings have been well maintained and consequently there are no features within the stonework on all elevations. The welsh slate roof has several features allowing potential access to the roof-space but the feature with the most potential is the single storey roof that has York stone slates. As with all such roofs, when there is a membrane beneath the slates it provides the perfect roost for crevice dwelling bats.

## 5.4 Inside inspection of building

- 5.4.1 The two storey section with the Welsh slate roof has fibreglass insulation at ceiling height and no membrane beneath the slates. It was also found to be extremely 'cobwebby'. The single storey sections were also extremely 'cobwebby' with fibreglass insulation at ceiling height. However, the roof in these sections have bitumen hessian felt beneath the slates.

**Plate 2** The Sports Club on Towngate



## **5.5 Activity surveys**

- 5.5.1 **Dusk survey, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015** – Two people undertook the survey and both were in position 15 minutes before sunset (Sunset 21.39). The surveyors were positioned so that all of the building could be monitored for bat activity.
- 5.5.2 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 15.8c with a force 3 South-easterly wind and 90% cloud. The temperature dropped to 15c by the end of monitoring and the other conditions remained the same.
- 5.5.3 At 21.49 a Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* emerged from the roof of the adjoining building (no 58 Towngate). It flew east over the roof of the Sports club. Thereafter another five passes of Common pipistrelles were observed mainly on Towngate.

## **6. Assessments**

### **6.1 Summary and evaluation of findings**

- 6.1.1 The only suitable bat roost feature within the buildings is the York stone slate roof(s) that have a membrane beneath on the single storey sections. However, the roof is very low in height and cluttered with shrubs on the south elevation and being adjacent to other higher buildings that have the same feature it is considered less likely to be attractive to bats. Therefore the buildings were considered to have only low roost potential.
- 6.1.2 No bats emerged from the building during the single activity survey. However, a single Common pipistrelle emerged from the roof of the adjoining building at the rear. As initially thought, the adjacent properties were indeed more attractive to bats. The roost will not be affected by the proposed development and change of use of the Sports Club.

### **6.2 Survey limitations**

- 6.2.1 A daytime bat survey is used only to determine whether bats are present and if a more detailed survey is required in preparation for a protected species license application. A dusk/dawn bat activity survey in the summer months when bats are most active can give a much greater indication of the level of use of the building, in addition to the species present, roosting locations and access and exit points.
- 6.2.2 Large or complex buildings require a number of surveyors equipped with appropriate bat detectors and monitoring devices to ensure that the range of frequencies used by British Bats are covered, thus ensuring that no bat species are overlooked during the dusk survey. The 'Frequency Division' detector is a broadband detector i.e. all frequencies used by British bats can be heard at the same time. The heterodyne detector can only monitor one frequency at a time but by continually rotating the frequency dial between 35 and 50 kHz, this covers many of the species likely to be found roosting inside a building.

Rotating the dial through all frequencies at regular intervals allows the surveyor to identify the specific frequency of the call.

### **6.3 Legislation and policy guidance**

6.3.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (and 2011 Amendment Regulations) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994.

6.3.2 It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats where the disturbance is likely to significantly effect the ability of any significant group of animals to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young or likely to significantly effect the local distribution or abundance of the species, whether in a roost or not.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
- Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.

6.3.3 The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.

6.3.4 Individual Species Action Plans (SAPs) have been developed to address the causes of decline for those species that have been identified as priorities for UK conservation action. Country-level lists contain species considered of national importance in biodiversity strategies. The current list includes Bechstein's Bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat, Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Barbastelle, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown long-eared bat. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.

6.3.5 In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, "to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". It notes that "conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat".

6.3.6 Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on bats or on a bat roost, a European Protected Species (EPS) license must first

be obtained from Natural England, even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.

- 6.3.7 An EPS license application requires details of the proposed works, the bats which may be affected and the mitigation proposed to maintain the favourable status of bats in the region. The application is usually drawn up on behalf of the client by a specialist ecological consultant. The consultant is likely to be required to check that work is proceeding in accordance with the method statement and to also carry out monitoring of the impact on bats for sometime after completion of the works.
- 6.3.8 When considering an application, the Natural England licensing section may consult with the local planning authority and specialist conservation staff. This process may take a considerable length of time. Natural England presently states that it aims to make a decision on an application within 30 working days of receipt. There is no guarantee that a license will be granted and no fast track process to obtaining a license. Applications can only be made once planning permission has been granted (where appropriate).
- 6.3.9 EPS licenses can only be issued if Natural England is satisfied that there is no satisfactory alternative to the development and that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.
- 6.3.10 NPPF: 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils.
  - Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services.
  - Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 No bats were recorded roosting on site during the survey works and consequently there is no compulsory requirement for mitigation. However, in order to enhance the ecological value of the site and in accordance with the aims of planning policy NPPF: 11, it is usually suggested that owner/developer integrates bat roosting features into the redeveloped building. However, in this case, considering the abundance of roosting features within the roofs of the buildings in the vicinity, it is not considered worthwhile. For further information on appropriate bat roosting features please contact Middleton Ecological Consultancy.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 The building has few suitable features that can accommodate bats and consequently the building was considered to have only low bat roost potential. No visible signs of bat occupation were found and the emergence survey was also negative.
- 8.2 No further survey effort is necessary for the building subject to the planning application and therefore a European Protected Species License is not required.
- 8.3 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should be stopped and further advice sought without delay.
- 8.4 The precautionary measures are recommended.

## **References**

Mitchel- Jones AJ, 2004, Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature.

Bat Conservation Trust, 2007. Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines.