Number 5, Two Gates, Slaithwaite

Results of Preliminary Bat Survey

Mrs Dyson

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Terms of Reference and background to proposals

SLR Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Mrs Dyson to undertake a bat survey of an existing detached property known as Number 5, Two Gates, Slaithwaite, West Yorkshire, HD7 5UG (approximate OS grid reference SE 07235 14252).

Planning permission is being sought to demolish and rebuild a small extension, located on the northern side of the property. The exterior of the main house is also to be repaired, and repointed throughout, with the replacement of windows, and the rebuilding of a section of the eastern wall, which is bowing. The stone roof tiles on the main house are also going to be turned, and the existing bitumen underfelt lining replaced with a breathable roofing membrane, although the roof void itself will be retained.

It is hoped that works will commence during the summer of 2017.

A bat survey has been requested by Kirklees Council, in an initial consultation response dated 13th February 2017 (refer to Appendix A).

1.2 Relevant Legislation & Policy[1]

1.2.1 Legislation

In England, all British bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which defines European protected species, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. These pieces of legislation combine to give substantial protection to bats and their roost sites, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately/intentionally kill, injure or take a bat;
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not); or
- Deliberately/intentionally or recklessly disturb[2] bats.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations.

[1] Please note that this legal information is a summary and intended for general guidance only. The original legal documents should be consulted for definitive information. Web addresses providing access to the full text of these documents are given in the References & Bibliography section.

[2] Disturbance, as defined by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, includes in particular any action which impairs the ability of animals to survive, breed, rear their young, hibernate or migrate (where relevant); or which affects significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species.

1.2.2 Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) lays out current government policy on sustainable development including considerations towards biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on planners to make material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) (Anon, 1995), organised to fulfil the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, to which the UK is a signatory, has produced a national priority species list with all species included having specific action plans defining the measures required to ensure their conservation. Regional and local BAPs have also been organised to develop plans for species of nature conservation importance at regional and local levels.

The UKBAP, as updated in 2007, lists seven bat species as conservation priorities:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Fieldwork

An internal and external building inspection was undertaken by Mr Gary Oliver, Principal Ecologist with SLR Consulting, and Natural England Class 2 bat licence holder (number CLS001202), on the 16th of February 2017.

The loft void above the main house was inspected for signs of occupation by bats, including droppings and moth wings, and bats themselves; this was aided by the use of a powerful Clulite (million candlepower) torch, a small 'flexi-torch', and a fibre-optic endoscope. Approximately 15 sections of roofing felt were cut away, on both sides of the ridge within the roof void above the main house, to expose the underside of the stone tiles, and to search the cavity between the underfelt and these outer tiles, which was again aided by the use of a flexi-torch and fibre-optic endoscope.

The small loft void about the northern extension was also inspected, again using a powerful Clulite (million candlepower) torch, a small 'flexi-torch', and a fibre-optic endoscope.

The exterior of the property was also searched for characteristic signs of occupation by bats, such as droppings on walls, windows and window sills. Potential bat access points and roosting opportunities were also searched for; this was aided by the use of binoculars and a powerful (million candlepower) Clulite torch.

2.2 Desk Study

The West Yorkshire Bat Group was contacted for relevant bat records, both of the Site and land within a 2km radius.

Data was provided on the 17th of February 2017.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Results of Site Visit

The survey site consisted of a large three storey detached property, and a two storey extension and coal bunker, located to the north/ north-west (Plate 1).



***Plate 1**: View of Number 5, Two Gates, as seen from the north-east.*

The roof void above the main house measures approximately 7 metres x 6 metres, is up to 2 metres in height (at the ridge), and is partly boarded-out. It is open and completely under-felted using bitumen roofing felt; it was reported by the occupant that the roof tiles were turned approximately 15 years ago, and the bitumen lining put in at that time.

The roof void has been used to store a few planks of wood but is otherwise disused; it is dusty and heavily cobwebbed. Some gaps exist in the stonework on the north-facing gable (Plate 2), which lead into a cavity wall. It is assumed that this cavity will once have had a rubble in-fill, however, over time this has 'settled' towards the bottom of the cavity, leaving the upper section open. This was inspected using a flexi-torch and fibre-optic endoscope, furthermore, approximately 15 sections of roofing felt were cut-away, and examined using a flexi-torch and fibre-optic endoscope (Plate 3).

No bats, or signs of bats, were found on the floor of the roof void, between the cut-away sections of roofing felt and the outer tiles, or in the cavity wall (where visible) on the northern gable end.



***Plate 2**: One of the gaps within the stonework, on the northern gable, as viewed from within the loft void, leading into an open cavity. This, and several other gaps, were inspected using a flexi-torch and fibre-optic endoscope, but no bats or signs of bats (such as droppings) were found.*



***Plate 3**: One of circa 15 sections of cut roofing felt, close to the ridge, which were examined for bats, and evidence of occupation by bats; none was found.*

The roof void above the northern extension is relatively small and low, measuring approximately 5 metres x 4 metres and 1 metre in height (maximum). The space is open, and the stone tiles do not have underfelt; it is heavily cob-webbed (Plate 4). It is reported

that the tiles on this roof were not turned when the main roof was turned, around 15 years ago. There are several gaps in the wall, particularly on the eastern side of the extension.

No bats or signs of bats were found in the roof void above the extension, although a bird skeleton, mostly likely a starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) was found (Plate 5).



***Plate 4**: Roof Void above two storey extension; no bats or signs of bats were found.*



***Plate 6**: Skeleton of bird, mostly likely starling, on floor of roof void above two storey extension.*

Externally the building is in poor condition, with many sections of missing mortar and other gaps of potential value to roosting bats.

The northern gable end (facing the adjacent road, Holme Lane) is approximately 15 metres tall. There are several gaps along the verge, immediately beneath the tiles, a *circa* 1.5 metre long diagonal subsidence crack in the stonework, to the east of the upper window, as well as several gaps within the stonework on the western side of the gable, 3 metres above the upper window (Plate 7).

The front (eastern) elevation of main house also contains a number of gaps and crevices, including a vertical gap where mortar has fallen away beside an upstairs window (Plate 8), and between two upright sections of a second floor mullion window (Plate 9). In addition to this, there are several gaps within the upper section of stonework, several of which appear deep enough to offer potential opportunities for roosting bats (an example of which can be seen in Plate 8).

The southern gable end of the main house also contains a number of gaps in the stonework, particularly above and below the upper, blocked-up, window, and in the verge, immediately beneath the tiles (Plate 10).

As with the other aspects, there are several gaps in the stonework on the west-facing side of the main house, particularly above the bricked-up window, nearest the road. The roof on the western aspect could be examined from a vantage point high on an adjacent bank, this revealed that many of the tiles are raised, or have gaps beneath them (particularly along the north-facing gable), several of which appear potentially large enough to accommodate roosting bats (Plate 11).



***Plate 7**: Northern gable end, with gaps in verge (beneath tiles), 1.5 metre long subsidence crack above and to left of window, and gaps in stonework above and to right of window, offering roosting opportunities for bats.*



***Plate 8**: Gaps beside and above and to left of upper window, on eastern (i.e. front) elevation, of potential value to roosting bats.*



***Plate 9**: Gap between mullion window (circled), on second floor of eastern elevation, of potential value to roosting bats.*



Plate 10: *Southern gable end, with many gaps in stonework above and below blocked-up windows, and immediately beneath tiles along the verge, of potential value to roosting bats.*



Plate 11: *Western side of house, including roof, which contains several raised tiles (particularly on left hand side), creating opportunities for roosting bats.*

As with the main house, the stonework of the two-storey extension is also in a poor state of repair, affording several opportunities for roosting bats.

The northern gable end of this extension (immediately adjacent to the road) contains a large section of missing mortar along the verge (Plate 12), and there are several gaps in the

stonework on the eastern elevation (Plate 13). There are also several gaps between the tiles, which appear once to have been coated with bitumen, which has perished (Plate 14).



Plate 12: *Gap in verge along the northern gable of the two storey extension (directly facing onto the road), of potential value to roosting bats.*



Plate 13: *Eastern elevation of two-storey extension; there are several gaps in the stonework beneath the gutter, of potential value to roosting bats.*



Plate 14: *View of western aspect of the two storey extension, showing gaps between and beneath some of the stone tiles, offering further potential roosting opportunities for bats.*

Although the property sits in a relatively exposed position, on the western edge of Slaithwaite, it lies approximately 75 metres to the south of Slaithwaite Reservoir, a large water body, surrounded by trees (Plate 15), offering excellent conditions for foraging bats.



Plate 15: *View of Slaithwaite Reservoir (from the east, looking west) which lies circa 75 metres to the north of the Site.*

3.2 Results of Desk Study

Information provided by the West Yorkshire Bat Group is provided in Appendix B.

This confirms that a number of bat species have been recorded in the area, although none of the records relate to the Site itself.

A number of Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*) bat records have been provided for the River Colne, in central Slaithwaite (SE 085144), approximately 1.3km to the east of the Site. These records relate to bats foraging along the river, rather than roosting bats.

A nyctalus bat foraging record also exists for Hill Top, Slaithwaite (SE 076142), beside Slaithwaite Reservoir, approximately 400 metres east of the Site.

A number of pipistrelle/ common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) records were also provided, including records of maternity roosts at Bank Gate Mills (SE 0766214145), dating from 2006, Clough House Lane (SE 067414414), dating from 1989, and Lingfield Terrace (SE 0829414430), dating from 2006, located *circa* 430 metres east, 620 metres west, and 1.1km north-east of the Site, respectively. Records of three smaller pipistrelle roosts were also provided, but none of these are located in close proximity to the Site.

4.0 DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The three storey building known as Number 5, Two Gates, and its two storey extension, have potential to support roosting bats. However, no evidence was gathered within either of the two roof voids to indicate that roosts occur within the roof voids themselves, including between the roofing felt and outer tiles, above the main house.

Externally, the property is in a poor state of repair; there are numerous gaps within the stonework, along gable verges, and around mullion windows; furthermore, many of the thick stone tiles are also raised, offering further roosting opportunities, particularly where the tiles overlap.

Although the building lies in a relatively exposed position, it is located close to Slaithwaite Reservoir, a large body of water, offering excellent opportunities for foraging bats.

Overall, the building has been assessed of having High potential to support small numbers of roosting bats, but it is considered unlikely to support a significant roost, such as a maternity colony.

It is therefore recommended that a dusk/ dawn bat detector survey, to be undertaken within the period mid-May to August inclusive, is conditioned. If bats are found roosting within the property during this survey, a European Protected Species Licence, potentially a Low Impact Class Licence, may need to be obtained from Natural England, in order to allow the development to proceed legally.

If bat roosts are found, the need or otherwise, for a licence will depend on the location of the roost and/ or the timing and nature of the works. If, for example, bats are roosting in a small gap in external stonework, and this is due to remain unaffected, and is not re-pointed, or if the works can be carried out at a time of year when the bats are not present, and the roosting feature replaced/ reinstated in its original position by the time the bats are likely to return to this roost, then it is possible that a licence may not be required.

5.0 CLOSURE

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Limited with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the manpower and resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is for the exclusive use of Mrs Dyson. No warranties or guarantees are expressed or should be inferred by any third parties. This report may not be relied upon by other parties without written consent from SLR.

SLR disclaims any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the work.

6.0 REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anon (1995) *The UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough, UK.

Collins, J (2015) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), London.

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

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. [Eds.] (2004) *The Bat Workers Manual* (3rd edition). Joint Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough, UK.

APPENDIX A:

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM KIRKLEES COUNCIL, DATED 13th FEBRUARY 2017

Consultation Response:
Kirklees Council Conservation & Design (Biodiversity)

Date	*13/02/2017*
Officer responding	*Tom Stephenson*
Application number	*2016/94291*
Purpose	*Initial consultation response*
Location	*5, Two Gates, Holme Lane, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield, HD7 5UG*

Assessment

I have applied the Council's standardised system for determining the need for a bat survey to this application, which has indicated that bat survey is needed in this case.

The process for determining the need for bat survey is as follows; if a property falls within a GIS layer known as the 'Bat Alert Layer' planning officers use details of the proposals to apply a flow diagram, which indicates if further assessment for bats is required. The bat alert layers for West Yorkshire and flow diagram are available on this web page: http://www.wyjs.org.uk/ecology-service/planning-issues/

The requirement to consider bats, and biodiversity in general, is a statutory requirement on the LPA and the process outlined above forms part of the means by which we discharge this duty. The intention is that it is an objective and robust approach.

Recommendation

Further bat survey is required to determine this application. Without this information I am opposed to the proposals on the basis of insufficient information.

Daytime inspections for bats can be undertaken at any time of year and in many cases are sufficient to determine if bats are likely to be affected. However, if a day time inspection (also known as a **preliminary roost assessment**) indicates that full activity survey (also known as **presence/absence survey**) is needed, then this information will also be required to determine the application. It may therefore be necessary to delay the application decision until at least May of 2017. In any case the survey should meet the minimum standards for bat survey in West Yorkshire (West Yorkshire Ecology Service, 2012).

References

DCLG. (2012). *National Planning Policy Framework.* London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

West Yorkshire Ecology Service. (2012, July 18). *Ecology Service: Planning Issues.* Retrieved January 3, 2017, from West Yorkshire Joint Services: http://www.wyjs.org.uk/media/1367/150603-minimum-standards-for-bat-surveys-version-5-draft-lp.pdf

APPENDIX B:

DESK STUDY DATA OBTAINED FROM WEST YORKSHIRE BAT GROUP ON 17th FEBRUARY 2017

Grid Ref	Location Name	Date	Common Name	Recommended Name	Abundance	Record Type
SE085144		07/08/2011	Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	1 pass Count of Adult	field record
SE085144	Slaithwaite Spa, River Colne	14/08/2008	Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	0 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE085144	Slaithwaite Spa, River Colne	28/08/2008	Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	1 unsure Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE085144	Slaithwaite Spa, River Colne	10/08/2009	Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	1 unsure Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE085144	Slaithwaite Spa, River Colne	31/08/2009	Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	2 unsure Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE085144		15/08/2010	Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	2 unsure Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE076142	Hill top, Slaithwaite SE076142	24/07/2006	Nyctalus Bat species	*Nyctalus*		aural bat detector
SE0766214145	Bank Gate Mills, Bank Gate, Slaithewaite	15/07/1989	Pipistrelle Bat species	*Pipistrellus*	51-100 Count of Adult	Roost (maternity)
SE0672414414	2 Clough House Lane, Slaithwaite	05/08/1996	Pipistrelle Bat species	*Pipistrellus*	21-50 Count of Adult	Roost (maternity)
SE084142	Spa Mill	29/08/2001	Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	1 Count of Adult	Roost (possible)
SE081146	Spa Mills, Slaithwaite	31/07/2011	Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	5 Count of Adult	Roost
SE06031473	Woolroyd, Slaithewaite	24/09/2013	Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	6 Count of Adult	Roost
SE0829414430	19 Ingfield Terrace, Slaithwaite	14/07/2006	Pipistrelle Bat species	*Pipistrellus*	150 Count of Adult	Roost
SE076142	Hill top, Slaithwaite SE076142	24/07/2006	Pipistrelle Bat species	*Pipistrellus*	3 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE07651395	Kirklees, 10 Howgate Road, Slaithwaite	23/05/2000	Vesper Bat species	*Vespertilionidae*		field record

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