Land off Manchester Road

Linthwaite,

Preliminary Bat Survey

& Ecology Walkover

December 2017

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1 Introduction

1.1.1.1 This report presents the results of a preliminary bat survey and ecology walkover undertaken on land off 1064 Manchester Road, Linthwaite.

1.1.1.2 Currently the land comprises several stable blocks with associated yard and access track off Manchester Rd. An aerial view of the site and its geographical context is shown in Figures 1 and 2. The site is centred on grid reference SE 08531 14034.

1.1.1.3 The land has been proposed for development which requires the demolition of the existing buildings.

1.1.1.4 This report contains information obtained from a site visit completed on 24th November 2017 and a desk-based study with use of information obtained from West Yorkshire Bat Group.

1.1.1.5 The aim of this report is to inform the development proposals of all considerations relating to bats at the site. This includes presenting information to verify the presence / likely absence of a bat roost, recommendations for applying mitigation where appropriate and, providing 'way forward' guidance should further detailed assessment be required.

1.1.1.6 In addition to bats, all other potential protected / notable species constraints such as badgers and nesting birds were assessed during the site visit.

Figure 1: Aerial view of the site subject to survey (approximate boundary line only)

Figure 2: Location of site in context with surrounding area

2 Methodology

2.1 *Desk Study*

2.1.1.1 West Yorkshire Bat Group (WYBG) was contacted for records of bats within a 2km radius of the property.

The below listed data sources were searched to gather additional ecological data of relevance to the project including the identification of habitats recognised as being of 'principal importance' (NERC Act 'S41 Listed' Habitats) and the identification of non-designated ecologically sensitive habitats such as vegetation corridors, watercourses and standing water.

- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC).
- Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 mapping.
- Aerial imagery (Google Earth Pro – imagery dated 2016 & BING maps).

2.2 *Preliminary Bat Survey*

2.2.1.1 A survey of the property was undertaken on 24th November 2017 by Ryan Knight MCIEEM (Natural England Class Licence Registration No. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS – CL18 Survey Level 2) of Quants Environmental Ltd.

2.2.1.2 The buildings were searched for bats, evidence of bat use and for potential roost access points/roost features in accordance with the standard methodology as far as was practical[1]. Evidence of bats can include droppings, scratches, staining, urine marking, dead bats and feeding remains (e.g. moth wings).

2.2.1.3 The extent of the structural features of each building that were suitable to support a bat roost defined an assessment of the potential of bats being present within the building. This potential was categorised as *negligible, low, moderate, high* or *confirmed roost* (based on the presence of bats or sufficient evidence of a bat roost). Other considerations which influence the potential of the property for use by bats were also taken into account including the site location and the suitability of the surrounding habitats for bats. This data was obtained from the site visit and desktop sources.

2.2.1.4 A high-powered LED torch and ladders were used during the survey. A digital endoscope was available for use if required.

2.3 *Ecology Walkover*

2.3.1.1 An ecological walkover was also completed to gather sufficient baseline information of the habitats within the site in order to allow an interpretation of the ecological value of the land. In addition, the site was searched for incidental evidence of protected / notable fauna and assessed in terms of its potential to support protected / notable fauna.

2.4 *Survey Comments*

2.4.1.1 The survey was undertaken outside of the period when bats are most active (April to October). External evidence of bats outside this period can be more difficult to detect because bats are less active and often use an alternative roost outside of the summer months. Bat droppings are also more readily removed by wind and rain outside of the summer period. However, evidence of bats is often prevalent long after bats have left a roost or entered hibernation, particularly at the roost emergence points. Bat droppings can also be found under roof eaves and other external sheltered locations outside of the main active period.

2.4.1.2 Overall, it is considered that there were no significant constraints to achieving the purpose of the assessment.

[1] Collins,J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-13 978-1872745-96-1

3 Results

3.1 *Existing Bat Records*

3.1.1.1 Information provided by WYBG is included in Appendix 3. The records are varied and include activity records of Daubenton's, noctule, *Nyctalus* species, common pipistrelle, pipistrelle species and several unidentified bats. There are also several notable pipistrelle maternity roost records within Slaithwaite.

3.1.1.2 There are no historic or existing records of bats from the site or from the adjacent land and properties.

3.2 *Site Description*

Buildings

Please also refer to the photographs in Appendix 2.

The site is accessed from a track off Manchester Rd and comprises a livery yard with several stables and 2 small parcels of land used for pasture and as an exercise area. The pasture land which forms the west and east boundaries of the site is not included within the application site.

The stables are a mix of construction types. Whilst they are of a similar building design (pitched roof with under boarding and timber trusses), a range of materials have been used. The roofs comprise bitumen lining or corrugated sheets and the side walls comprise concrete blocks or timbers slats. Many repairs have been carried out on most buildings with use of a range of makeshift materials. Internally, most buildings contain pens and associated feed stores.

Whilst there are a low number of crevices within each building (e.g., gaps from warped timbers and crevices between timber slats), such building types offer a limited extent of genuine roost features and are not typically associated with bat roosts.

Grassland

There are 2 small fields on the north boundary of the site. The field sward was very closely grazed at the time of survey; however, both are species poor semi-improved, neutral grasslands. The yard contains a mix of rank grassland and ruderal vegetation.

Scrub & Trees

A tall line of conifers (*Cupressus* × *leylandii*) is situated on the access track at the site entrance and screens off the site. Semi-mature self-seeded ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees are located adjacent to this treeline in the very southeast corner (adjacent to Manchester Rd).

There is also a dense area of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg*.) adjacent to this line of conifers.

Surrounding Land

The site is situated within a belt of pasture land and parkland between the River Colne and Manchester Rd. This land stretches from Slaithwaite and Linthwaite.

Manchester Rd provides the sites south boundary. Pasture fields form the sites west and east boundaries and Slaithwaite Spa Park forms the sites north boundary. The woodland within this park is listed within the Priority Habitat Inventory as *Deciduous Woodland* (UKBAP listed habitat).

The banking between the site and the access road to Slaithwaite Spa Park is a mix of mostly sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) trees, scrub and planted shrubs.

The wider area is a mix of industrial units and estates, dwellings, pasture land and parkland. The River Colne is 50m north. Huddersfield Narrow Canal runs parallel to the river to the north of the site.

3.3 *Habitat Evaluation*

3.3.1.1 The land and buildings will provide foraging opportunities for bats. The site is generally open and in proximity to urban areas; therefore, a low species diversity is expected within the site itself. There are habitats of high value to bats within the locality including woodlands and watercourses which provide foraging and connective flyways for bats. Overall, there are no significant constraints to the presence of bats at the site and a low to moderate level of bat activity is expected within the site.

3.4 *Evidence of Bats and Bat Roost Potential*

3.4.1.1 No evidence of a bat roost was observed during the site inspection. Such building types are not typically associated with bat roosts. The site is not expected to support significant concentrations of bat activity or a high species diversity.

3.4.1.2 Overall, all buildings within the site are given a 'negligible' bat roost potential classification.

3.5 *Nesting Birds*

3.5.1.1 There are a number of suitable features for nesting birds within the buildings and these buildings, along with the conifers and bramble cover are expected to support nesting birds during March to July (inclusive).

3.6 *Other Protected / Notable Species*

3.6.1.1 No other potential ecological constraints have been identified during the field survey and desk study.

3.7 *Designated Sites*

3.7.1.1 There are no statutorily protected sites within a 2km radius.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 *Bats*

4.1.1.1 The main conclusions from the preliminary bat survey are as follows:

- No evidence of a bat roost was observed.
- The buildings are classified as 'negligible' in their potential for use by bats. The main limiting factors in the potential of the building for bats is the construction types and associated absence of genuine roost features.
- Low to possibly moderate bat activity levels are expected within the site.
- There are no trees within or immediately adjacent to the site with potential to support bats.

4.1.1.2 Given the above findings, it is concluded with reasonable confidence that the site does not support a bat roost.

Recommendations

4.1.1.3 Bats are not considered to present a constraint to development plans as all legal and planning policy obligations relating to bats are met. No further survey or mitigation is considered necessary at the site.

In line with both regional and national planning policy guidance, as a biodiversity enhancement, the development may want to consider the fixing of 3no. bat boxes at the site. Recommended bat box models include boxes that can be integrated into the fabric of a building as it is being built. A wide range of designs are available such as Eco Bat Box, Schwegler 1FT Bat Tubes (which can be rendered over), Ibstock enclosed bat boxes and Habibat models.

4.2 *Other Protected / Notable Species*

4.2.1.1 The buildings may support nesting birds; therefore, the development is minded to take into account the appropriate timing for the demolition of the buildings (see below).

4.2.1.2 No other potential protected / notable constraints to the development proposal have been identified.

Recommendations

4.2.1.3 No demolition or land clearance work should be undertaken during the bird nesting season of March to August unless preceded by a nesting bird check to determine the presence / absence of nests. If an active nest is found, it must be avoided until the nest is no longer in use. The installation of 3no. bird boxes is recommended within the new development. Specific designs for house sparrow and starling are recommended.

4.3 *Habitats*

4.3.1.1 There are no notable habitats of value within the site.

4.3.1.2 The site is located immediately adjacent to Slaithwaite Spa Park and to the south of River Colne with associated woodland. It is not known if the park forms part of Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network; however, it is advised that mitigation is provided to protect this green corridor from development impacts.

Recommendations

4.3.1.3 The 2 small field plots on the north boundary of the site are proposed to be set aside for ecological enhancement as part of the development scheme (Figure 3). With consideration of the parkland to the north, it is recommended that this land be subject to tree planting so as to compliment the adjacent woodland. Upon maturation, the planting area would provide direct value to wildlife and added screening from the development. The trees should be sourced from British seed stock and ideally be of local provenance. A species list and tree numbers is not provided at this stage but the trees could include oak, birch, rowan, cherry, blackthorn, hazel, holly, elder, hawthorn, crab apple.

Figure 3: Land set aside for biodiversity enhancement.

Appendix 1: Legislation

Bats

All British bat species are fully protected through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as European Protected Species (EPS). They also receive some protection through inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat. It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat. It is an offence to deliberately disturb a bat; in particular any disturbance which is likely (a) to impair their ability - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

The 'appropriate authority' (Natural England in England) has powers to issue licences for various purposes including - (a) scientific or educational purposes… and (e) preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment. The appropriate authority shall not grant a licence under this regulation unless they are satisfied - (a) that there is no satisfactory alternative, and (b) that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. It is an offence for any person authorised by virtue of a licence to which this paragraph applies to contravene or fail to comply with any condition which the licence requires him to comply with.

Several species of bat including brown long-eared and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are identified as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species.

Nesting birds

All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs. Bird species listed in Schedule 1 of the 1981 Act, such as barn owl, receive further protection which makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb these species while building a nest or in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or to disturb dependent young of such a bird.

Appendix 2: Photos

Photo 1: View northwest towards site.	
Photo 2: View of northernmost buildings within the site.	
Photo 3: Inside one of the stables	

Photos 4 to 6: Stables blocks	  

Photo 7: Internal view	
Photo 8: Field to north	

Appendix 3: WYBG Records

Grid Ref	Location Name	Date	Common Name	Recommended Name	Abundance	Record Type
SE0812		02/08/2010	Eptesicus	Eptesicus		aural bat detector
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	0 passes 1 unsure Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE085144	Slaithwaite Spa, River Colne	31/08/2009	Daubenton's Bat	Myotis daubentonii	0 passes 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
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	08/07/2002	Noctule	Nyctalus noctula	7 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	09/07/2003	Noctule	Nyctalus noctula	6 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	30/07/2003	Noctule	Nyctalus noctula	9 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	22/07/2004	Noctule	Nyctalus noctula	5 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	22/07/2005	Noctule	Nyctalus noctula	4 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	10/07/2007	Noctule	Nyctalus noctula	7 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE076142	Hill top, Slaithwaite SE076142	24/07/2006	Nyctalus Bat species	Nyctalus		aural bat detector
SE0812		12/07/2010	Nyctalus Bat species	Nyctalus	1 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812		02/08/2010	Nyctalus Bat species	Nyctalus	1 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0766214145	Bank Gate Mills, Bank Gate, Slaithewaite, HD7 5D?	15/07/1989	Pipistrellus	Pipistrellus	51-100 Count of Adult	Roost (maternity)
SE0672414414	2 Clough House Lane, Slaithwaite, HD7 5UP	05/08/1996	Pipistrellus	Pipistrellus	21-50 Count of Adult	Roost (maternity)
SE095147	Lowestwood Lane	05/08/1996	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	51-100 Count of Adult	Roost (maternity)
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	30/07/2000	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	17 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0958015074	8 Oak Drive	01/06/2001	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	uknown Count of Adult	Roost (possible)
SE084142	Spa Mill	29/08/2001	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	1 Count of Adult	Roost (possible)
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	08/07/2002	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	16 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	17/07/2002	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	16 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	08/07/2005	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	12 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	22/07/2005	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	7 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	13/07/2006	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	6 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	30/07/2006	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	4 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	10/07/2007	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	19 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812		12/07/2010	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	6 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812		02/08/2010	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	13 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE098140	78 Causewayside, Linthwaite, Hu	25/08/2010	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus		aural bat detector
SE097145	Hoyle Ing Dyeworks, Linthwaite,	16/05/2011	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	1 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE081146	Spa Mills, Slaithwaite	31/07/2011	Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	5 Count of Adult	Roost
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	14/07/2000	45 Khz Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	9 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	08/07/2002	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus	3 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	17/07/2002	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus	6 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	09/07/2003	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus	17 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	30/07/2003	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus	23 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	10/07/2004	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus	10 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
SE0812	Holt Head near Slaithwaite	22/07/2004	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus	9 Count of Adult	aural bat detector
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
SE0958713489	123 Upper Clough Road, Linthwai	30/01/2007	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus		Roost (possible)
SE0938414355	Thornton & Ross, Linthwaite, Hud	09/07/2007	Pipistrelle Bat species	Pipistrellus	not recorded Range	Roost (maternity)
SE0959115118	101 Lowestwood La, Golcar	02/04/1997	Vesper Bat species	Vespertilionidae	Not Recorded Range	Roost (possible)
SE07651395	Kirklees, 10 Howgate Road, Slaith	23/05/2000	Vesper Bat species	Vespertilionidae		field record
SE0945413875	38 Stones Lane, Linthwaite, Hudd	23/07/2001	Vesper Bat species	Vespertilionidae	30 Count of Adult	Roost