Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Wildlife Consultants.

OXFORD ROAD, GOMMERSAL.

OS REF: SE 207 263.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No:- **140735.**

Date: **18th July 2014.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION.	**3**
2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.	**4**
3. SURVEY RESULTS.	**5**
4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.	**11**
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.	**13**
Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.	**15**

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application has been submitted for the construction of a dwelling on a piece of land adjacent to the old Police Station. An assessment of the impact of the development on bats has been requested by Kirklees Council in support of that application.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to carry out a bat survey and assessment of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. This survey was carried out on 18th July 2014 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendix I of this report provides back ground information with respect to bats and the legal protection afforded to them.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The adjacent structure was checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with L Hundt (2012). *Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines* by looking for the following signs:-

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.

2.2. All survey work was carried out in line with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines

2.3. This was not followed by a dusk emergence survey or a bat activity survey.

2.4. The survey was undertaken by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England survey licences for barn owl, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Site Description.

3.1.1. The site and surrounding area are shown on the aerial photograph below with the site outlined in red.



3.1.2. Immediately to the north of the site is the old police station, fronting immediately onto the pavement.

3.1.3. To the south of the site is Gomersal Hall, a large old building set back from the road with a parking area in front. To the south of that there is a large car parking area for the Red House Museum with a row of mature trees along the roadside and with Gomersal Park to the south.

3.1.4. On the opposite side of the road is a large old school that is now disused.

3.1.5. To the north and west there are residential areas.

3.1.6. The site comprises the old Police Station car park with a small lawn and flower garden that has become neglected and overgrown, shown below.



3.1.7. The photograph below shows the frontage of the site with the Police Station to the right and Gomersal Hall to the left.



3.1.8. The photograph below looks from the overgrown lawn across the front of the site towards the school opposite.



3.1.9. The photograph below looks across the parking area towards the old Police Station and Oxford Road.



3.1.10. The photograph below looks across the back of the site towards Gomersal Hall and shows a line of four immature ash trees along the southern site boundary. The maximum girth of the trees is 200mm and one has a trunk with ivy cover.



3.2. Survey Results.

3.2.1. The only trees on the site are four immature ash trees and one holly bush. None of these contains any opportunities for roosting bats.

3.2.2. There are no buildings on the site that would provide potential for roosting bats.

3.2.3. The Police Station building adjacent to the site has recently been granted planning consent and development is about to start with scaffolding being erected at the time of this survey.

3.2.4. The building walls are cut and coursed stone walls in excellent condition with stone cornices around the eaves. The stone roof slates are in very good condition with no missing or displaced slates and all ridge tiles are pointed. This building has no potential for roosting bats.



3.2.5. Gomersal Hall is located adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. This is also constructed from cut and coursed stone with walls in good condition and stone cornices. The roof is covered with stone slates and the roof is in good condition. This building is also assessed to have no bat roosting potential.

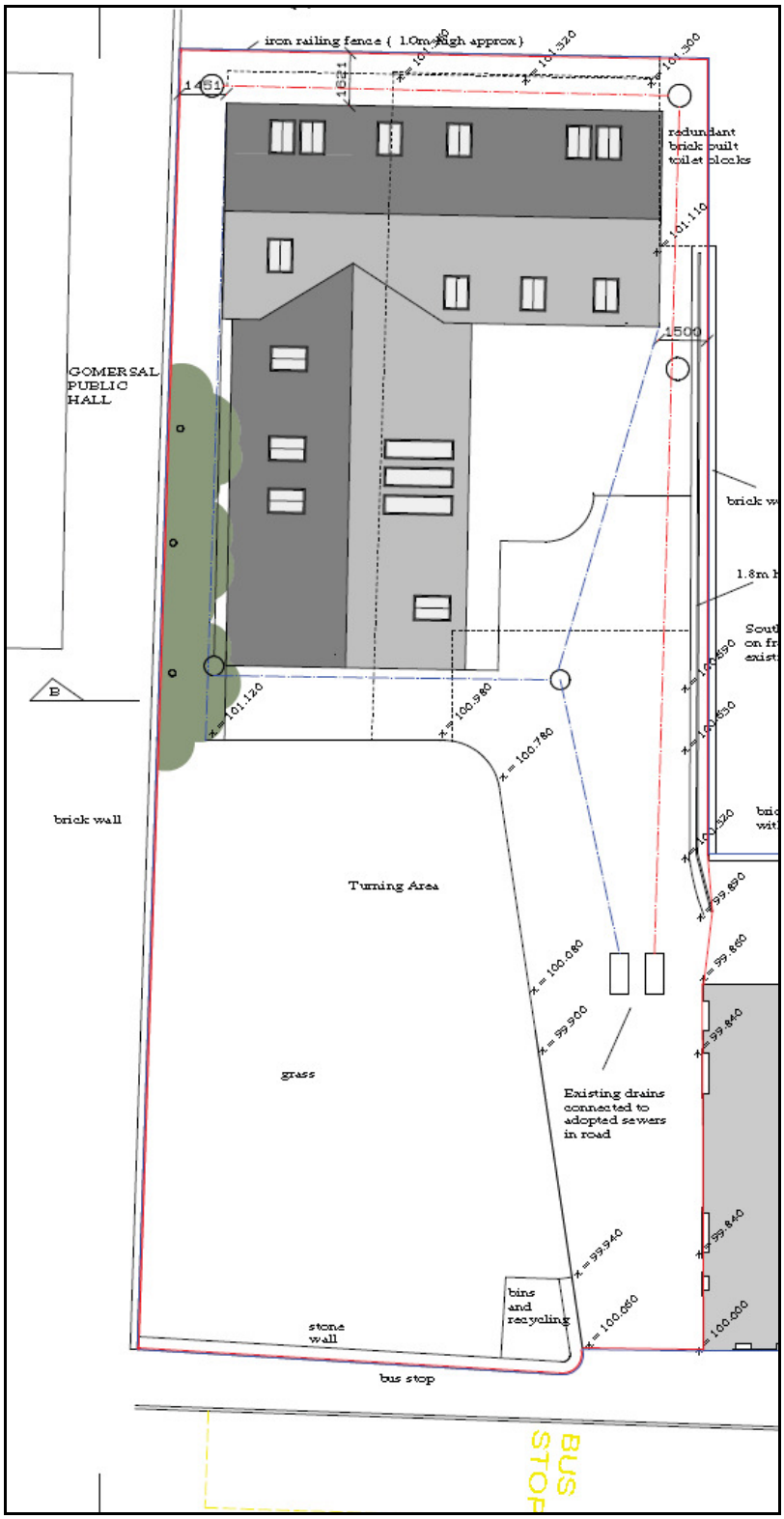


3.2.6. There are no bat flight paths across the proposed development site.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The proposed site plan is shown below. The new dwelling will be built entirely on existing areas of hard standing and the existing front garden retained.



4.2. Four immature ash trees on the site boundary adjacent to Gomersal Hall will be removed. These trees are too immature to provide bat roosting opportunities and they form no connective flight line for foraging bats.

4.3. The proposed development will therefore have no impact on roosting or foraging bats.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. The proposed development will have no impact on roosting or foraging bats and therefore there will be no requirement for a mitigation strategy or for a Natural England licence in connection with the proposed development.

5.2. While no mitigation is necessary, the developer is prepared to install a bat box into the cavity of the new dwelling. An example is shown below.



5.3. As the new dwelling will be position low down within the site in relation to the surrounding buildings, the optimum position for the bat box is in the northern gable end of the building, as shown by the yellow dot in the elevation drawing below.



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

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Checked by:	
Steven Whitcher. MCIEEM.	Date: 19th July 2014.

Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

It is necessary to understand a little about bats, their basic nature, ecology and legal protection in order to evaluate the findings of this report.

Over 15 species of bat have been recorded in Britain. These fall into two families, the horseshoe bats and the 'ordinary bats'. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet, and habitat change.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, The Habitats Regulations 1994 and the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

A breeding or resting site of any bat is known as a bat roost. A bat roost is therefore any structure a bat uses for shelter or protection. Because bats tend to use the same roosts each year, legal opinion is that the roost site is protected whether or not the bats are present at that time.

Bat roosts can be identified by looking for:-

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices.
- Bat droppings.
- Prey remains.
- By carrying out night observations using a bat detector.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

The person applying for that licence has to be suitably qualified and experienced in bat matters. That person is then responsible for ensuring that the measures contained in the licence are carried out.