

# **Ecological Appraisal**

## **Storage shed**

### **West Rainton Cemetery**



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Ecology Section  
Durham County Council  
January 2019**

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Address: **West Rainton Cemetery, Co.Durham.**

Surveyor: Gary Shears

Date: January 2019



**Figure 1: Location of study area**

## **Executive summary**

Durham County Council Ecology section was commissioned by West Rainton Parish Council to undertake an ecological appraisal of a brick storage shed in West Rainton Cemetery (figure 1 above). The appraisal is required to inform the demolition of the building.

The building was surveyed externally in January 2019 to identify any bat roosts and to determine the overall risk of bats using the building.

No bat roost was identified, and the building contained few features that bats could use for roosting.

There are several trees in the vicinity and foraging opportunities are reasonable with connectivity to high quality foraging habitats.

It is anticipated that there is a very low risk of bats being affected as a result of the demolition of this building. As very few bat roosting opportunities exist in the building, no mitigation for bats is proposed.

The large Ivy plant growing on the western elevation provides good habitat for breeding birds therefore demolition is proposed outside of the bird breeding season.

## Site description

The single storey building is constructed of brick with a clay tile hipped roof. The areas immediately surrounding the building are comprised of a graveyard and residential housing. There are several trees on the site and the Churchyard to the north provides connectivity from the survey site to good bat foraging habitat at the Nature Reserve at Rainton Meadows.



Figure 2: Habitats around the survey site

## Survey methodology

### Desk top survey

The Environmental Records Information Centre (North East) database was checked for species records in the vicinity and the DCC GIS was checked for designated sites.

### Site based survey

Survey was undertaken in January 2019 and the building was inspected externally for bat field signs and features that bats could use. Where necessary high-powered torches, binoculars, ladders and endoscopes were used to assist the survey.

The building was unused at the time of survey and there was no access inside. There was only access around three sides of the building due to the position of the boundary fence however this was not considered a constraint to the survey as all features could be clearly observed.

Weather conditions were favourable for the survey.

## Survey results

### Existing data

### Protected habitats

Moorhouse Wood Local Wildlife Site	1.5km from site
Pittington Hill Local Wildlife Site	1.9km from site
Rainton Park Wood Local Wildlife Site	2km from site
Frankland and Kepier Woods Local Wildlife Site	2.3km from site
Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve	1.3km from site
Moorsley Banks Site of Special Scientific Interest	1.4km from site
Joes Pond Site of Special Scientific Interest	1.3km from site

### Protected species within 2km of site

Dingy Skipper	Within 2km of site
Hedgehog	Within 2km of site
Great Crested Newt	Within 2km of site
Brown hare	Within 2km of site

### Building survey

The building contains few opportunities for bat roosting. Gaps were noted in the brickwork between the single brick walls and flat concrete roof (plate 1 below) however when inspected with a torch they were heavily cobwebbed. The entrance doors are tight to the walls.

The wooden soffits were mostly tight but where gaps exist they were heavily cobwebbed (plate 2 below). There are no windows.

The clay tile roof was generally tight with no large gaps that bats could use.

The area around the building are colonised with ruderal vegetation and at present do not contain any habitats of conservation importance.

The cemetery offers reasonable bat foraging habitat and there is connectivity to Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve to the north.

Residential housing is located to the north, east and west of the survey site and this is likely to be favoured by bats both for roosting and foraging.

The dense Ivy growth provides good sheltered bird breeding opportunity therefore further checking surveys are required if demolition is proposed in the bird breeding season (March to end July).



**Plate 1: gap in brickwork providing access into building**



**Plate 2: heavily cobwebbed soffits**

## **Impact assessment**

The demolition of the storage shed is not predicted to have a detrimental impact on designated habitats or protected species.

No signs of bat roosting were found and very few opportunities exist for bats to roost in the building. Foraging habitat is reasonable around the building however as bat roosting opportunity is minimal the risk of encountering bats during the demolition is low.

The building is proposed for demolition however as impacts on the local bat population are negligible it is considered that no further survey work or mitigation is required for bats.

Mitigation is proposed for breeding birds. A checking survey is required if the building is to be demolished in the bird breeding period (March to end-July) or demolition can be undertaken outside this period.

No mitigation is proposed for bats however in the unlikely event that bats are found they must be handled carefully (using gloves) and placed in a cardboard box with air holes. All work in the area must stop and the Durham County Council Ecology Team must be called immediately on

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