



# **ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT PHASE 1 HABITAT & PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEY**

**Chestnut Cottage  
Sheldons Lane  
HOOK  
Hampshire  
RG27 9LH**

**For:  
Mr & Mrs Hawthorne  
Chestnut Cottage**

**Karen L Buckley (Miss) BA  
ERAs Consultancy  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

**Bat licence no.: 2015-13787-CLS-CLS  
Great crested newt licence no.: 2015 -8022 -CLS-CLS**

**ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

**Phase 1 Habitat & Protected Species Survey**

Chestnut Cottage, Sheldons Lane, Hook, Hampshire RG17 9LH

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## **ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

### **Phase 1 Habitat & Protected Species Survey**

Chestnut Cottage, Sheldons Lane, Hook, Hampshire

Survey: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The ERAs Consultancy was commissioned to carry out a protected species survey of a detached cottage, at the southern end of Sheldons Lane in the suburbs of Hook in Hampshire. The site is located at Ordnance Survey grid reference: SU 721541.

It is proposed that the cottage and garage will be demolished and replacements built.

#### **2.0 Site Description**

The survey site has a well tended garden with lawns and decorative trees, and tall hedges around three of the boundaries. The central section of the cottage is the oldest with later extensions from the 1970's. A double garage from a similar period is located at the entrance to the property.

#### **3.0 Survey Methods and Constraints**

- 3.1 The survey took place on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The weather was broken cloud with a temperature reaching 15 degrees centigrade.
- 3.2 The field survey involved examining the house in detail and walking over the garden area to search for plants and animals and to assess the habitat types. The habitat survey followed the methodology set out in JNCC guidelines (1990), 2007 edition.
- 3.3 The survey for the presence of animals with statutory protection followed best practice guidelines and involved looking for signs such as suitability of habitat, paths made, droppings and physical presence.

#### **4.0 Statutory Wildlife Designations**

There are no statutory wildlife designations within the study site or immediately adjacent under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (W&C Act) (as amended). *The Habitats Directive* embodied in the *Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994*, and interpreted as the UK's Biodiversity Action Plans, lists species of concern. These species do not necessarily have Statutory Protection but are regarded as requiring positive management to enhance populations. See **Appendix 2** for the species and habitats protected under the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

## 5.0 Flora – Habitat Summary

The walk-over survey identified the broad character of the habitats found within the study area. The following notes summarise the main habitat types.

No plant listed on Schedule 8 of the W&C Act (1981) was found growing on the site.

### 5.1 Trees, shrubs and hedges

The boundaries have tall hedgerows of Leyland cypress, yew and cherry laurel on 3 sides. Specimen trees of laburnum, *Acers* etc. have been planted against the hedges. A mature horse chestnut grows by the entrance to the garden.

### 5.2 Lawns

The lawns are sown with red fescue, *Festuca rubra*, and are located to the front, sides and rear of the cottage. The lawns are cut regularly.

### 5.3 Wetland

There is no pond in the garden and none are known from adjacent gardens.

### 5.4 Land adjacent to the survey site.

The garden is bordered to the west, north and south by similar mature gardens with detached houses. See aerial photograph below.

## 6.0 Fauna

### 6.1 Mammals

The survey was targeted at those mammal species having statutory protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994; Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations Act 2010, Badger Protection Act 1992; those listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan; and in national and local Red Data lists. The aim was to use survey techniques to identify the presence or likely occurrence of protected species.

#### 6.1.1 Bats

All species of bat are protected under the *Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981* (schedule 5), as amended and the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations Act 2010*. Not only are the animals protected from being disturbed or killed but their roost sites are protected, whether or not a bat is present at the time. If any of these consequences are likely then a Natural England European Protected Species Licence would be required to permit activities that would otherwise be unlawful.

There is no previous information on bat species at the survey site. There are flight records for natterer's, noctule and daubenton's and roost records for pipistrelle in

this 10 km square. The gardens in the area offer good feeding habitat for species such as pipistrelle which is the most abundant bat species.

The survey involved checking the interior and exterior of the house for bat droppings and potential access under lead flashing or roof tiles etcetera.

### **Tree roosts**

The majority of the trees are growing on the garden boundaries. Most are too young to have rot holes, loose bark, splits and dead wood that could be used by bats for roosting. The slight change in footprint will require the removal of an apple tree which has no bat roost potential.

The surveyor holds bat licence no.: 2015-13787-CLS-CLS.

#### 6.1.1.1 Survey of Buildings

<b>Building</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Bat roost potential</b>
Original cottage	East/west ridge with c. 1m high void. Water tank. Dense cobwebs along ridge. No bat droppings. Insulation felt between rafters. Vermiculite insulation between joists. Roof covered in clay tiles. Partly built with walls of lathe & plaster and partly 9" brick. Exterior rendered. Exposed rafter tails around eaves. Tight lead flashing around chimney.	No evidence of use by bats found
Extension on east side	Single storey extension with sloping roof, of similar age to cottage. Adapted as the kitchen in the 1940's. Replaced in late 1970's. No accessible void. Exposed rafter tails.	No bat roost potential
Extension from 1970's	An E/W extension links the original cottage with a separate, hipped building which has a N/S ridge. Both sections have clay tile roofs, matching the cottage. The under-felt is a layer of fibre-glass on stiff, tarred paper. C. 2m high to ridge. Cobwebs along ridge. No bat droppings. Rafter tails exposed externally.	No evidence of use by bats.
Extension on south side. C. 1980's	N/S ridge with shallow roof void above a summer room. No access to void. Clay tiles match main cottage. Rafter tails exposed.	No potential for bats.
Garage	Double garage with single block walls supported by piers. Tarred under-felt under clay roof tiles that match cottage. Separate storage area above. Rendered externally. No bat droppings	No evidence of use by bats or birds

#### 6.1.1.2 Emergence survey

As there was no evidence of bats being present then a Phase 2 emergence survey is not considered necessary.

#### 6.1.2 Badger

The badger and its sett are protected by the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*. It is illegal to take, injure or kill badgers. Under Section 3 of the Act it is illegal to damage or destroy a sett, obstruct access to a sett or disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett. The working limit for heavy vehicles and pile drivers is 30metres from a sett.

No sett occurs within the garden and a walk round the boundaries did not pick up any badger paths, dung pits or feeding activity. No sett is known to occur within 50m of the site boundary. The proposal is not expected to disturb badgers.

#### 6.2 Amphibians

Natural England advises that water bodies within 500m of a development site be checked for great crested newts. Great crested newts (GCN) are protected under European legislation because of their scarcity there. However, despite the population declining in the UK they are still quite widespread in England.

There are no national records for GCN for this 10 km square.. No ponds are known from adjacent gardens or within 500m of the site. Great crested newts are not expected to occur on the survey site.

The surveyor holds Great Crested Newt licence number: 2015 -8022 –CLS-CLS

#### 6.3 Reptiles

The commoner reptiles, common lizard, slow-worm, grass-snake and adder have statutory protection from being killed or injured under the terms of *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*. There are nationally held records for these four species in this 10 kilometre square. Reptiles like warm sandy soils and the cover afforded by the heather and scrub on heathlands or on rough grassland. The habitat on the survey site and in the immediate vicinity is not suitable for a reptile population as it consists of well manicured gardens in a suburban setting.

#### 6.4 Birds

Birds are legally protected from being killed and from being disturbed when in the process of nesting. The mature hedges on the boundaries and trees in the garden offer good cover for birds. It is likely that they are used by birds for feeding, roosting and possibly nesting. If work is carried out during the bird nesting season, March – September workers should be aware of possible nesting activity in the vicinity of the building works. A post by the garage supports a dense growth of ivy which has potential for birds to nest in. This needs to be checked before being removed.

#### 6.5 Non-protected animals

No other animal has been reported within the garden.

## **7.0 Discussion**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the house and garage will be demolished and replaced on slightly different orientations. This proposal is not expected to impact adversely on local wildlife.
- 7.2 No plants protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended, were found on the survey site.
- 7.3 Birds are protected from being disturbed while breeding. The main habitat to be affected is an apple tree and a pole covered in ivy, both of which will have to be removed. Birds could use the ivy and if removed during the bird breeding season, this should be checked for nesting birds.
- 7.4 No evidence of bats was found within the roof void of the main house or the main extension. No evidence was found of droppings under lead flashing or under roof tiles. The walls are 9" brick with at least one of lathe & plaster. The rafter tails are visible, even on the later extensions, so there is no potential for bats in cavity walls or soffits. No evidence was found that the garage was used by bats or birds. While bats from local roosts may feed over the garden, there is no evidence to suggest that the house supports a bat roost.
- 7.5 No badger activity was found on the site and no active setts are known to occur within 50 m of the house.
- 7.6 The habitat in the garden has little potential for reptiles because of the regular cutting of the lawns, which remove cover. Mature suburban areas generally lack reptiles because of predation from cats.
- 7.7 There are no records for great crested newt in this 10 km square and no ponds are known to occur within 500m of the garden. Newts are not expected to be present.
- 7.8 No habitat or species identified in the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan will be affected by the proposal.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

- 8.1 There is no evidence that the cottage or garage supports a bat roost but the garden may be used for feeding by bats from local roosts. So as not to cause disturbance to an existing feeding pattern, any exterior lights on the replacement house and garage should be either low-level or be directed downwards so as not to cause disturbance.
- 8.2 It is illegal to disturb a bird in the process of nesting until after the young are fledged. Work being carried out during the nesting season should take into account that birds could be using the mature hedges surrounding the site for nesting. The mature ivy growing up the pole beside the garage should be checked for nesting activity before being removed.

## **9.0 References**

- Amphibian & Reptile Conservation 2008 *Reptile Habitat Management Handbook*  
Amphibian & Reptile Conservation 2011 *Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook*  
Bat Conservation Trust 2008 *Bats and Lighting in the UK*.  
Bat Conservation Trust 2007 *Bat Surveys: Good practice guidelines*

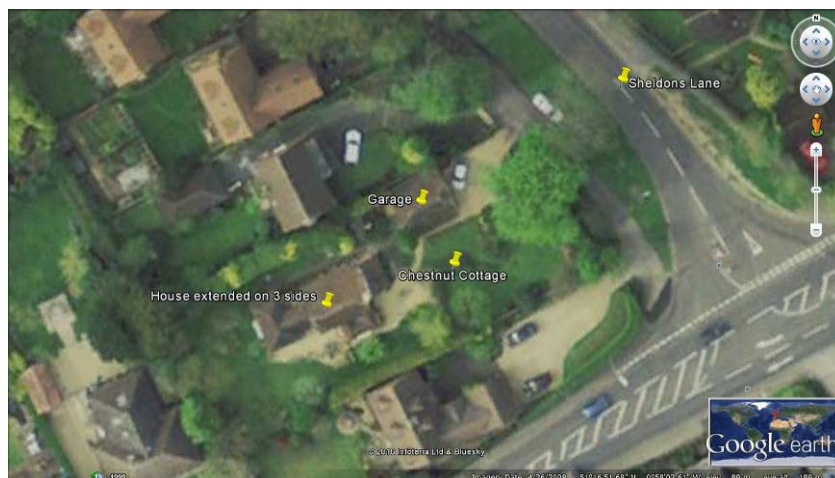
Clapham, A R, Tutin, T G & Moore, D M (1987) *Flora of the British Isles*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edn., CUP  
JNCC 2004 *Bat workers' manual*. Third edition.  
JNCC guidelines 1993 (2007 version)  
HMSO 1992 *Protection of Badgers Act*  
HMSO 1981 *Wildlife and Countryside Act*  
HMSO 2010 *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations Act*  
MAGIC internet site  
Richardson, P. (ed) 2000 *Distribution Atlas of Bats in Britain and Ireland*. Bat  
Conservation Trust, London.



**APPENDIX 2 HAMPSHIRE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2008**

There are 493 species on the full list)

<b>HABITAT ACTION PLANS</b>	
Ancient semi-natural woodlands	
Wood pasture and parkland	
Hedgerows	
Arable land	
Neutral grassland	
Lowland calcareous grassland	
Lowland wet grassland	
Heathland, acid grassland, bog	
Standing open water	
Chalk streams	
Rivers and streams	
Canals	
Coast	
<b>SPECIES ACTIONS PLANS</b>	
<b>Plants</b>	<b>Amphibians/Reptiles</b>
Rare flora	Natterjack toad
Hericium tooth fungi	Great crested newt
Stipitate hydroid tooth fungi	Smooth snake
Woodland lichens	Sand lizard
<b>Mammals</b>	<b>Crustaceans/Molluscs</b>
European otter	White clawed crayfish
Water vole	Large-mouthed valve snai
Barbastelle bat	
Serotine bat	
Bechstein's bat	
Pipistrelle bat	
Greater horseshoe bat	
<b>Birds</b>	
Seed-eating farm birds	
Birds of wet grassland	
Shorebirds	
<b>Invertebrates</b>	
Southern damselfly	
Butterflies and moths	
Bumblebees	
Hornet robberfly	
Noble chafer beetle	
Stag beetle	
Gilkicker weevil	
Medicinal leech	



**Photo 1:** Location of survey site



**Photo 2:** Original cottage with simple ridge



**Photo 3:** Shallow ridge void with water tank. Fibre glass under-felt



**Photo 4:** Western extension linked to the main cottage in the 1970's



**Photo 5:** North/south axis of extension



**Photo 6:** Section of roof over current kitchen, connecting extension roof with original house.



**Photo 7:** Former external wall of cottage within roof space of extension



**Photo 8:** Former kitchen lean-to on eastern end of main house



**Photo 9:** Small extension on southern side of main house



**Photo 10:** Garage with ivy covered pole with bird nesting potential



**Photo 11:** Large storage area above garage



**Photo 12:** Apple tree in lawn that will need to be removed