

WHARTON

Natural
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Consultants

Presence/Likely Absence Survey for Bats

SITE LOCATION

County Lane Farm, Codsall

PREPARED FOR

Ms. Katie Schofield

ISSUE DATE

19 July 2021

PRINCIPAL AUTHOR

Mr Matthew Wall

OUR REFERENCE

210719 1231 BAT V1



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VERSION: V1 DATE: July 2021
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Quality Assurance



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Remarks	Version 1
Date	19 July 2021
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Executive Summary

- A preliminary roost assessment was undertaken by the Principal Author on 5th March 2021 and Building 1 at the Site was assigned low potential to support roosting bats. Full details can be found with the preliminary roost assessment report submitted with the planning application (report ref: 210326 1231 PRA V1).
- One bat survey comprising a dawn survey was carried out on Building 1 in accordance with good practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) on 19th May 2021. Three surveyors were positioned around Building 1 with bat detectors, observing any bats entering (or emerging from) Building 1. The survey started 2 hours before sunrise and finished 15 mins after sunrise.
- **No bats were observed emerging from or returning to Building 1 during the survey.** Based on the survey information to-date bats are likely absent from Building 1, the Proposed Development will likely have no adverse effects on roosting bats and no further surveys or licensing measures are required.
- No further surveys to determine adverse effects on commuting or foraging bats are necessary due to the scale and nature of the Proposed Development. Lighting impacts however should avoid the vegetation along County Lane as this is likely to be used by commuting bats and foraging bats due to the presence of mature vegetation and hedgerows connecting to the wider area.
- In the unlikely event that bats are unexpectedly found during construction, works must cease immediately, and a suitably qualified ecologist/Natural England must be contacted for advice on how to proceed.



1. Introduction/Background

1.1 Principal Author

- 1.1.1 The Principal Author of this report is Matt Wall *BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIEEM* (Senior Ecologist). The Principal Author has over eight years of professional experience in ecological consultancy and has worked on projects ranging in scale, including mineral, waste, commercial and residential sites, throughout the UK. The Principal Author currently holds a Class 2 licence from Natural England for bats (*Chiroptera* spp.) and has worked on a number of bat mitigation projects ranging from maternity roosts of Annex II species to transitional and occasional roosts of common species.
- 1.1.2 The Principal Author is an associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ('CIEEM') and is therefore subject to CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct.
- 1.1.3 The detail provided within this report is a true and accurate reflection of both the Site conditions as well as the professional opinion of the Principal Author at the time the survey was completed.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

- 1.2.1 Wharton Natural Infrastructure Consultants Ltd ('Wharton') were commissioned by Ms Katie Schofield (the Applicant) to undertake a bat survey at County Lane Farm, Codsall (known henceforth as 'the Site') to determine whether bats were present or likely absent from Building 1 (as referenced at Appendix 2) following recommendations made within a Preliminary Roost Assessment (ref 210326 1231 PRA V1).
- 1.2.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Planning Authority with sufficient information to understand the status of protected species (bats) at the Site such that a decision can be made in respect of the Applicant's planning application.

1.3 Description of Site and Local Area

- 1.3.1 The Site is located within a primarily agricultural area, immediately north of the A41. The Site is bordered to the north and west by agricultural land, to the east by County Lane and to the south by the A41. Land use in the local and wider area is dominated by agriculture with small areas of woodland interspersed throughout.
- 1.3.2 There is reasonable ecological connectivity to/from the Site in all directions for bats in the form of field boundary hedgerows and a large area of woodland to the east of County Lane.

1.4 The Proposed Development

- 1.4.1 The Proposed Development involves the conversion of Building 1 to residential use.
- 1.4.2 The proposals detailed above will be referred to throughout this report as the 'Proposed Development'.



2. Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

2.1 Relevant Legislation

- 2.1.1 Bats are European Protected Species (EPS) and are protected under both European and UK legislation comprising The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HMSO, 1981) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (HMSO, 2017) (HMSO, 2019). Offences under the legislation which are potentially relevant to this development include:
- The deliberate capture, injury or killing of a bat;
 - The deliberate disturbance of a bat, particularly disturbance which is likely to; impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
 - The damage/destruction of, or obstruction of access to a breeding site or resting place (even if unoccupied) – referred to within this report as a 'roost'.
- 2.1.2 Several species of bats are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (HMSO, 2006). This legislation requires planning authorities to consider biodiversity when undertaking their duties.
- 2.1.3 Full legislative text should be referred to as above text is a summary only. Please refer to the online legislation for the most recent legislative updates.
- 2.1.4 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 provides safeguards for European Protected Sites and Species (as listed in the Habitats Directive). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas now that the UK has left the European Union.



2.2 Relevant Planning Policy

2.2.1 Planning policies which are relevant to the Proposed Development are summarised below in Table 1.

Table 1. Planning Policy Relevant to the Proposed Development

Planning Policy	Relevance to the Proposed Development
<p>National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2019)</p>	<p>National Planning Policy Framework section 170 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressure.</p> <p>Section 174 of the NPPF states that in order to protect biodiversity, plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.</p> <p>Section 175 of the NPPF states: <i>"if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused".</i></p> <p><i>"Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists."</i></p>

*Full policy text should be referred to as table text is a summary only

2.2.2 The South Staffordshire Council Core Strategy (South Staffordshire Council, 2012) has been reviewed and an excerpt is provided in Appendix 3.

3. Methods & Methodology

3.1 Limitations

3.1.1 No significant limitations were noted at the time of the survey.

3.2 Bat Activity Survey Method

3.2.1 One dawn return-to-roost survey bat survey was carried out on Building 1 in accordance with good practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) on 19th May 2021 as detailed below.

3.2.2 Surveyors were positioned to view all elevations of Building 1 to observe the emergence or re-entry of any bats that may be roosting within the building.

3.2.3 The equipment used for the surveys were the Pettersson D240x, Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro and an Anabat Walkabout detector, which record calls in full spectrum in case subsequent analysis is required, however, due to the ease of identification of species recorded, no subsequent call analysis was necessary in this instance.



Dawn Re-entry Survey

3.2.4 The dawn re-entry survey was undertaken on 19th May 2021 by the following surveyors, led by the Principal Author.

Table 2. Dawn Re-Entry Surveyor Details – 19th May 2021

Map ID	Personnel	Relevant Licences held	Equipment used
MW	Matt Wall	Class 1 Bat Survey Licence	Anabat Walkabout
RP	Rebecca Perry		Emtouch PRQ2
GR	George Rudd	Experienced Bat Surveyor	Pettersson D240x

3.2.5 Locations of surveyors are shown with the results of the survey at Appendix 2.

4. Bat Survey Results

4.1 Dawn Survey -19th May 2021

4.1.1 The dawn re-entry survey was undertaken on 19th May 2021 using 3 surveyors. Sunrise was at 05:06hrs.

Table 3. Weather conditions during Dawn survey on 19th May 2021.

Parameter	Start	End
Time	04:00	05:15
Temperature	10°C	9°C
Cloud Cover	40%	50%
Precipitation (Y/N)	N	N
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	0	0

Roosting Bats

4.1.2 No bats were observed returning to Building 1 at the Site during the re-entry survey.

4.1.1 Two common pipistrelle bats were observed briefly foraging in the courtyard of the wider Site during the dawn survey. These bats flew west from the courtyard at 04:30 and 04:34 and were not seen or heard for the remainder of the survey.

4.1.2 Lighting levels at the Site were relatively high during the survey due to the presence of security lighting on the farmhouse to the south of Building 1. This is likely to reduce the suitability of the Site for foraging and commuting bats which are less tolerant of light (such as brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*)).

4.1.3 Bat activity at the Site was, otherwise, very low.



5. Recommendations and Conclusions

- 5.1.1 No bats were observed emerging or returning to Building 1 during the survey. Based on the survey information to-date bats are likely absent from Building 1.
- 5.1.2 The Proposed Development will likely have no adverse effects on roosting bats and no further surveys or licensing are required.
- 5.1.3 No further surveys to determine adverse effects on commuting or foraging bats are necessary due to the scale and nature of the Proposed Development. Lighting impacts however should avoid the adjacent vegetation on County Lane where possible as this is likely to be utilised by bats in the local area.
- 5.1.4 In the unlikely event that bats are unexpectedly found during construction, works must cease immediately, and a suitably qualified ecologist/Natural England should be contacted for advice on how to proceed.

6. Enhancements

- 6.1.1 Any further planting required as part of the Proposed Development should include a range of native plants, including nectar and pollen-rich species within the planting scheme to attract invertebrate prey for bats in the local area, which will enhance the Site for foraging bats. These should be chosen from the RHS Perfect for Pollinators document (RHS, 2019).
- 6.1.2 The Proposed Development provides an opportunity to enhance the Site for roosting bats by providing a suitable roosting feature for bats. This can be provided in the form of an external bat boxes on the western or eastern gable. Suitable models include:
 - Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat Box
 - Eco Bat Box
 - 1FF Schwegler Bat Box with Built-in Wooden Rear Panel



References

- Collins, J., 2016. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition), London: Bat Conservation Trust.
- Department for Communities and Local Government, 2019. National Planning Policy Framework, London: Department for Communities and Local Government.
- Google Earth Pro, 2021. s.l.: Google.
- HMSO, 1981. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.
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- RHS, 2019. RHS Plants for Pollinators - Garden Plants. s.l.:Royal Horticultural Society .
- South Staffordshire Council, 2012. Core Strategy December 2012, Codsall: South Staffordshire Council.

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Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan (Google Earth Pro, 2021)



Kingswood Rd

A41

County Ln

Newport Rd

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Google Earth

1945

Imagery Date: 6/29/2018 52°37'34.47" N 2°14'50.42" W elev 128 m eye alt 769 m

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Appendix 2 – Bat Activity and Survey Plan



- Building 1
- ◆ Surveyor Location
- Ppip flight line out of Site
- ← Ppip flight line into site
- Area of brief Ppip Foraging



Date: 19/07/21

Client: Ms. Katie Schofield

Project: County Lane Farm, Codsall

Title: Bat Activity and Survey Plan

Map file reference	Plan No.
210719 1231 BAT V1	E002

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Appendix 3 - Local Planning Policy Excerpts (South Staffordshire Council, 2012)

Core Policy 2: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment

The Council will support development or other initiatives where they protect, conserve and enhance the District's natural and heritage assets including ecological networks internationally, nationally and locally important designations. Particular support will be given to initiatives to improve the natural environment where it is poor and increase the overall biodiversity of the District including the development of green infrastructure links and to improve the historic environment where it is identified as at risk.

Development or initiatives will generally be supported which:

- a) will not have a detrimental impact upon the interests and significance of a natural or heritage asset;
- b) are not contrary to the control of development within internationally, nationally or locally designated areas including the Green Belt and Open Countryside, Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Motte Meadows Special Area of Conservation, and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the character of the landscape and local distinctiveness;
- c) are consistent with the sustainable management of the asset including the repair and reuse of historic buildings;
- d) protect and improve water and air quality;
- e) provide mitigation or compensatory measures to address any potential harmful implications and supporting enhancement measures.

Development proposals should be consistent with the NPPF, the Supplementary Planning Documents on the Historic Environment and Biodiversity and other local planning policies.

Development proposals should have regard to and support the actions and objectives of the Severn and Humber River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) and also have regard to the River Severn and River Trent Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs).



Policy EQ1: Protecting, Enhancing and Expanding Natural Assets

Permission will be granted for development (alone or in combination) which would not cause significant harm to sites and/or habitats of nature conservation, geological or geomorphological value, including ancient woodlands and hedgerows, together with species that are protected or under threat. Support will be given to proposals which enhance and increase the number of sites and habitats of nature conservation value, and to meeting the objectives of the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP).

In line with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), development proposals must not adversely affect the ecological status of a water body and wherever possible take measures to improve ecological value in order to help meet the required status.

International Sites

Any proposed development that could have an adverse affect on the integrity of an international wildlife, geodiversity or landscape site (e.g. Natura 2000 or Ramsar site, Special Area of Conservation) or on ground water flows to those sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met.

National Sites

Protected wildlife, geodiversity and landscape sites designated under national legislation are shown on the Policies Map [e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs)] and will be protected under the terms of that legislation.

Local Sites

Locally important sites are also identified [e.g. Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs), Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)] and will be protected and enhanced. Outside the areas designated, the interests of nature conservation must be taken into account in accordance with national guidance.

The restoration or creation of new habitats and the expansion of habitats in South Staffordshire will be supported where these contribute to priorities in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan including priority habitats such as native woodland, hedgerows, and lowland heathland. Areas or sites for the restoration or creation of biodiversity priority habitats will be identified through Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping working in partnership with Natural England, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Staffordshire County Council.

Wherever possible, development proposals should build in biodiversity by incorporating ecologically sensitive design and features for biodiversity within the development scheme.

Development proposals should be consistent with the Supplementary Planning Documents on Biodiversity and Landscape Character and other local planning policies.

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