



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

St Marys House
Church Street
Bentworth
GU34 5RD

Revision 2: 13TH DECEMBER 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Bearfoot Ecology was contracted in June 2022 to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of St Mary's House, Church Street, Bentworth GU34 5RD. The Ordnance Survey grid reference for the Site is SU66444025.
- 1.2. The Site is located in the village of Bentworth. The nearest town is Alton, approximately 6 km to the east.
- 1.3. The Site is a two storey residential property with a multi pitched roof clad in slate. The house is situated within gardens, with Church Street present to the east with a school beyond. Other residential properties are adjacent to the north and southwest, with agricultural land beyond to the west (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Site location red line boundary

The proposals are as follows:-

- Single storey extension to front - enclosing the existing veranda, enlarging the Hall and creating a Lobby to the front door.
- Single storey extension to rear - filling in next to the existing kitchen and existing dining area.
- Two storey extension to rear - extending the existing Living Room and Bedroom 1 above.
- First floor extension to North side - creating 2 bedrooms over existing flat roof element of existing house.
- Changing the 3 sash windows (currently shown on the West Elevation in a 3600mm opening in the new Kitchen/Dining Area) to a pair of French doors with a sash window either side.

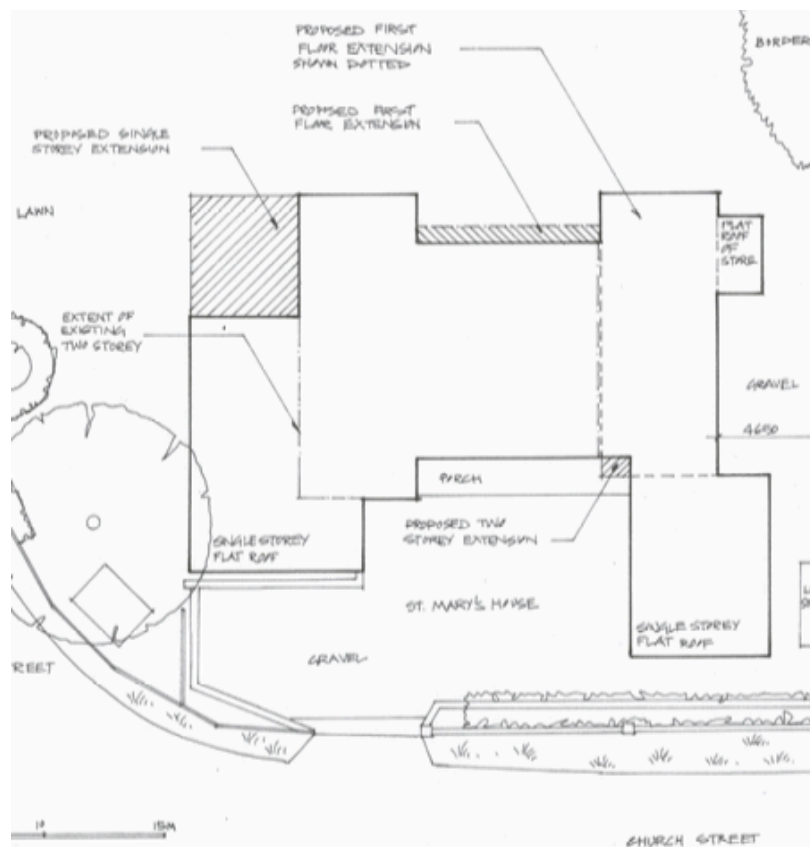


Image 2: Proposals plan (Block Plan)¹.

¹ Bonnington Architects. 2022.

2. Methodology

2.1. The Site was inspected on 4th July 2022 by Brian Hicks MSc MCIEEM. Brian is an ecologist with many years of experience in commercial ecology consultancy and wildlife conservation. He holds Natural England survey licences for bats (2015-14880-CLS-CLS), dormouse and great crested newt.

Data Search

2.2. The MAGIC website was searched for any designated sites and European Protected Species Licences for bats granted within 2km radius of the Application Site. The search also included Impact Risk Zones (IRZ's) of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) which the Application Site lies within.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

2.3. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken². This is an external and internal inspection survey, the purpose of which is to assess the likelihood of bats being present and the need for further survey and/or mitigation.

2.4. A systematic search was made of the building and the ground, especially below potential access points where present. Such features include windows sills, windowpanes, walls, tiles, weather boarding, lead flashing, eaves, behind peeling paintwork or surfacing materials and under tiles, and other cracks and crevices that provide protection from the elements. Such features are known to be used by roosting bats.

2.5. The survey was carried out using torches and an endoscope where appropriate. Evidence of bat activity searched for include droppings, urine staining and bat corpses, and clean swept floors (which may indicate evidence has been removed).

² Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

3. Results

Data Search

- 3.1. The MAGIC data search revealed that the Application Site is within the IRZ of several SSSI's, however as this is a householder application no consultation with Natural England is required.
- 3.2. The closest designated site is Wick Wood and Worldham Hangers SSSI, 9km to the southeast.
- 3.3. One granted EPSM licence for bats is within 2km of the Application Site. The EPSM site is approximately 270m to the southeast and was granted in 2014 for the destruction of a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* resting place (2014-707-EPS-MIT).

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.4. The house is a two storey residential property of brick construction with a multiple pitched hipped roof clad in slate. A single storey flat roof extension is present on the northern side. The windows, doors and soffits are of uPVC construction and are in good condition with no gaps (Photographs 1 and 2).
- 3.5. Internally the roof space is lined with sarking boards and breathable membrane with no gaps visible (Photograph 3).



Photograph 1: Eastern side of building.



Photograph 2: Western side of house.



Photograph 3: Internal view of roof space.

- 3.6. The house is well sealed with no gaps suitable for roosting bats visible. The majority of the roof is clad in slate tiles which are tightly fitted. The ridge tiles are clay and are tightly bonded to the roof. No evidence of bat activity was recorded either inside or on the external building surfaces.
- 3.7. In accordance with previously cited guidelines (Collins, 2016) the building was assessed as being of **negligible suitability** to support roosting bats.
- 3.8. The house is situated within a garden which contains several mature trees, and which is connected to suitable adjacent habitats. This area is considered suitable for foraging and commuting bats. However; it should be noted that the garden is not affected by the proposals. The proposed extensions will extend onto existing hard landscaping only.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. No evidence of bat activity was recorded during the preliminary roost inspection. In addition, no gaps suitable for roosting bats were recorded on the building and the building is assessed as having negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

4.2. Lighting recommendations follow which would maintain the suitability of the gardens for foraging and commuting bats.

4.3. Artificial lighting will be minimised within the scheme and lighting will minimise light spill either into the sky or onto linear features (e.g., tree lines) of the site, or onto the building itself. Considerations will be given to:

- Lighting will only be installed where there is a significant need, a minimal amount of light will be used, and lighting should be dimmed during periods of low public use;
- Avoid the use of high-pressure sodium lights, white LED broad spectrum lights (Stone et al 2012³, Stone 2013⁴) HPS and short wavelength 'blue' white sources (Falchi *et al.* 2011⁵) throughout the Development Site.
- No 'upward pointing' or bare bulb lights will be installed anywhere on the Approved development.
- Using narrow spectrum lights with no UV content such as low-pressure sodium and warm white LED; and
- Lights must have a focussed luminance on target area preventing light pollution into existing flight lines and habitat features of value to foraging and commuting bats.

³ Stone, E., et al., Conserving energy at a cost to biodiversity? Impacts of LED lighting on bats. *Global Change Biology Journal* (2012)

⁴ Stone, E.L. Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation. University of Bristol, UK. (2013).

⁵ Falchi, F., et al., Limiting the impact of light pollution on human health, environment and stellar visibility, *Journal of Environmental Management* (2011),

4.4. The proposals would conform to Policy CP21 of the East Hampshire District Council Local Plan adopted in 2014. As a contribution to Biodiversity Net Gain, consideration should be given to the installation of a bat box such as a Schwegler 1F or similar, on one of the mature trees within the garden.

APPENDIX 1: Legislation

Bats and the Law

All UK bat species are protected by European and UK legislation: the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and amendments and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This affords complete legal protection to all bats and their roosts.

Offences:

- To kill, injure or handle a bat
- Disturb bats when they are roosting
- Obstruct, damage or destroy the places where bats live (this applies even if the bats are not in residence)
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat
- Keep bats in captivity