



3 Ladywell, Wroughton

Bat & Bird Scoping Report

Prepared for: Linda & Paul Richards

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The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by Nash Ecology Ltd in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report was undertaken in July 2023 and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time.

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This report is considered ‘valid’ for up to two years from the date the walkover survey was conducted. If an application is made after this, then it is advisable to undertake an updated survey. In addition, any significant change to the project should result in consultation with an ecologist as reassessment of the ecological constraints may be required.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Scope

Nash Ecology Ltd was instructed to carry out a bat and bird assessment of a residential property, namely '3 Ladywell, Wrington, BS40 5LT' (Figure 1). The assessment was commissioned in relation to current proposals to modify the building, which includes works to the roof. As the works will be restricted to the footprint of the existing building and its immediate surrounds (i.e. patio and hard standing), the ecological receptors most likely to be encountered are bats and birds. As the proposed works have the potential to adversely affect both taxa, a targeted assessment was commissioned to ascertain whether either were present.

The remainder of this report provides methods, results and a discussion of potential impacts including, where necessary, a suitable mitigation strategy.

Figure 1: Site Location (Google Earth, 2020)



1.2 Legislation and Planning Policy Summary

1.2.1 Summary of Legislation Pertinent to Bats

All bats are protected under Schedule 2 the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). When taken together it is illegal to:

- Deliberately disturb, capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Obstruct, damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time); and
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part thereof.

Seven species of bat are included on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 as 'Species of Principal Importance for Conservation in England'. These include:

- Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*);
- Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*);
- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*);
- Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*);
- Brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*);
- Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*); and
- Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*).

Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places a duty of care on competent authorities to consider biodiversity as a material consideration when discharging their normal functions.

1.2.2 Summary of Legislation Pertinent to Birds

Nesting birds are protected through their inclusion on the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under the Act, it is an offence to harm a bird, its eggs or young whilst occupying a nest. For those species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bird that is on or near an 'active' nest.

Forty-nine species of birds are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as 'Species of Principal Importance for Conservation in England'.

1.2.3 Planning Policy Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 was considered in the preparation of this report. The NPPF specifies the obligations that the Local Authorities and the UK Government have regarding statutory designated sites and protected species under UK and international legislation and how this is to be delivered in the planning system. Protected or notable habitats and species should be considered as a material consideration in planning decisions and may therefore make some sites unsuitable for particular types of development. If the development is permitted, mitigation measures may be required to avoid or minimise impacts on certain habitats and species, or where impact is unavoidable, compensation may be required.

2 METHODS

2.1 Desk-based Study

A desk-based study was carried out to identify designated sites and biological records relating to the site. The online Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted to identify statutory sites designated within 2 km. The MAGIC website was also used to review granted bat mitigation licences (EPSML) within 1 km and the past five years. The search was based on grid reference ST 4667 6282.

2.2 Field Survey

2.2.1 Initial Bat Inspection

A Natural England (Class 2) licensed bat ecologist undertook an inspection of 3 Ladywell on 27th July 2023. During the survey, the surveyor inspected the property for exterior roosting locations and possible access points to the building’s interior. Such features were accessed and inspected for signs of use using an endoscope. An internal inspection was then undertaken.

As bats are a cryptic group and often move between roosts, both within and between years, their presence is not always easy to detect. The building was assessed for its Bat Roost Potential (BRP), following published guidance (BCT, 2016). The BRP categories are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Bat Roost Potential Categories (BCT, 2016 and Mitchell-Jones, 2004)

Roost Potential	Description
Known or Confirmed	Confirmed signs of bat presence/ occupation (droppings, oily staining around entry points, insect remains, odour, scratching) and actual bat presence.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Negligible	No features suitable for roosting bats. Includes structures constructed from unsuitable materials e.g. prefabricated with steel and sheet material. Structure is draughty, light and cool buildings with no roosting opportunities. High levels of regular disturbance including external lighting. Building is isolated for areas of foraging habitat. In the case of trees, no potential roosting features are present, or features have no potential to support roosting bats.

2.2.2 Birds

Concurrent with the bat inspection, 3 Ladywell was inspected for signs of nesting birds.

2.3 Survey Limitations

No constraints to the aims of the survey were noted.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk-based Study

Two statutory sites were identified within 2 km:

- King's Wood and Urchin Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): King's Wood–Urchin Wood represents one of the largest areas of ancient woodland remaining in Avon. The SSSI supports nationally important populations of greater horseshoe bat. The disused mine workings to the northeast of the site are used by substantial numbers of greater horseshoe bats, both as hibernation and maternity roosts. The SSSI is located c. 1.2 km to the northwest at its nearest point; and
- North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Area for Conservation (SAC): Amongst other features, the SAC was designated for its lesser and greater horseshoe bats populations. The SAC comprised multiple discrete sites, the nearest of which was located c. 1.2 km to the northwest (at its nearest point). The Site is located on the boundary between Bands A and B of the North Somerset and Mendip Bats Bat Consultation Zone (BCZ), which was instigated to control development that could affect the eponymous SAC.

Given both the distance and highly localised nature of the works, there will be no direct impacts on the SSSI or SAC; however, horseshoe bats are highly mobile. As such, the Site will be assessed for its potential to support either species.

No historical EPSML were identified within 1 km.

3.2 Site Context

The Site was located on the western edge of the village of Wrington in North Somerset. The house was set within a residential garden and bordered by further properties to the north, east and west. An active farm was located to the south. The adjacent road, Ladywell, included street lamps. Beyond the village, the wider landscape was dominated by agricultural land and woodland.

3.3 Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal

3 Ladywell was a detached, two-storey residential property that was constructed in 1960's (Plates 1 – 4). More recently, a two-storey extension has been added to the east of the building. Two single-storey extensions were located to the south. The exterior walls were rendered and included a stone façade in the north; the walls were in a good condition, lacking any cracks or crevices that could be exploited by bats. Intact double-glazed doors and windows were present throughout. Intact wooden soffit boxes were flush with the wall tops. The main roof was pitched and clad in pan tiles; the roof was in a good condition lacking any raised, slipped or missing tiles. One of the single-storey extensions included a sloping roof with pan tiles whilst the other was flat and covered in bitumastic felt. No external roost features were noted.

Plate 1: 3 Ladywell Northern Aspect



Plate 2: 3 Ladywell Southern Aspect



Plate 3: 3 Ladywell Eastern Aspect



Plate 4: 3 Ladywell Western Aspect



The property contained two loft spaces, referred to as Loft Spaces 1 and 2.

Loft Space 1 was in the original house and measured c. 15 m (L) x 6 m (W) x 1.5 m (H) (Plate 5). The roof was lined with bitumen felt and supported by a sealed wooden frame. A rendered chimney stack was located centrally. The gable walls were constructed from block. The floor was partly boarded and partly covered in fibreglass insulation. No signs of bats were recorded.

Loft Space 2 was in the two-storey extension and measured c. 6 m (L) x 5 m (W) x 1.5 m (H) (Plate 6). The roof was lined with breathable roof membrane and supported by a sealed wooden frame. The gable walls were constructed from block. The floor was covered in fibreglass insulation. No signs of bats were recorded.

Plate 5: Loft Space 1



Plate 6: Loft Space 2



Overall, the property was assessed as having Negligible BRP. This assessment is based on the paucity of roost locations, access points and historical signs of use.

3.4 Birds

No signs of nesting birds, past or present, were recorded at the property.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Bats

3 Ladywell was assessed as having Negligible Bat Roost Potential. The building lacked external roost locations and access point(s) to the property's interior. There were no historical signs of use by bats within the building. As such, the proposed works will not adversely affect roosting bats and, as the works will be restricted to the existing footprint and patio/hard standing, there is no risk of habitat fragmentation. Bat roosts can be highly transient, moving location both within and between years. If no works have been undertaken within two years of this report, a resurvey is recommended.

In the highly unlikely event of a bat being discovered, all works will stop and a bat ecologist will be consulted.

No suitable roosting habitat for horseshoe bats was recorded on Site. As the proposed works will be restricted to footprint of the existing building, there is no risk of habitat fragmentation or loss of foraging habitat. As such, it can be robustly concluded that the scheme will result in 'no likely significant effects' on the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC. Irrespective of this, a sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented. The sensitive lighting strategy will comprise the following broad elements (BCT, 2018):

- No excessive lighting - use only the minimum amount required for safety;
- Minimise light spill – use short columns and direct light downwards and in towards the Site;
- Use narrow spectrum bulbs that emit minimal ultra-violet light - avoid white and blue wavelengths of the spectrum, which can attract invertebrates;
- Lights should either peak higher than 550 nm or use glass lantern covers to filter UV light;
- Avoid using reflective surfaces under lights; and
- Minimise the amount of light spill by good design.

4.2 Birds

No signs of birds were recorded and no further survey or mitigation is proposed.

4.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

It is recommended that two bird boxes are included within the scheme (comprising one with a 32 mm entrance hole and one open-fronted box) to encourage a range of birds. It is recommended that woodcrete boxes are utilised as these provide longer lasting nesting opportunities than wooden boxes, which tend to rot quickly. The 32 mm box should be placed between 2 m and 4 m above ground level and the open-fronted box should be placed lower at about 2 m and within vegetation/cover. Boxes should not be positioned too close to each other to prevent aggressive behaviour between neighbours. Further information is provided at www.rspb.org.uk.

5 REFERENCES

- BCT (2016) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition. BCT, London
- BCT (2018) Bats and Lighting. Bat Conservation Trust, London
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough