

**The Meads,
Spratts Hatch Lane,
Winchfield
Hampshire,
RG27 8DD**

**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL
APPRAISAL
(including Phase 1 Bat survey)**

17th February 2023

Dr. Jonty Denton (Chartered Ecologist) FRES FLS MCIEEM CECol

Prepared by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consultant Chartered Ecologist Dr.Jonty Denton FRES FLS MCIEEM CEcol was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of The Meads, Spratts hatch lane, Winchfield, Hants, RG27 8DD (GR:SU777535).

This is required for a planning application seeking to demolish the existing bungalow and replacement with a new dwelling.

The survey area was systematically walked and surveyed according to Phase 1 Habitat Survey criteria during daylight hours by Dr.Jonty Denton on 17th February 2023. Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standardised system for classifying and mapping semi-natural vegetation and wildlife habitats in Great Britain. Vegetation is mapped in terms of standard habitat types as defined in the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2010).

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Hundt, 2012).

The loft is an active bat roots with at least five brown-long-eared bats in situ. There is also potential access points into the soffits.

INTRODUCTION

Site Proposals

This is required for a planning application seeking to demolish the existing bungalow and replace with a new dwelling.

METHODS

Introduction

This section details the methods used during the Phase 1 survey undertaken of land adjacent to The Meads

Phase 1 Habitat Survey Methods

The survey area was systematically walked and habitats mapped according to Phase 1 Habitat Survey criteria during daylight hours on 17th February 2023. Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standardised system for classifying and mapping semi-natural vegetation and wildlife habitats in Great Britain. Vegetation is mapped in terms of standard habitat types as defined in the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2010).

In addition, habitats were appraised for their suitability to support protected or notable (UK Biodiversity Action Plan/Species of Principle Importance [S41]) species, e.g. breeding birds, badgers, bats, herptiles, stag beetle, that might be affected by the proposed development; in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment' (IEA, 1995).

Phase 1 Bat Survey Methods

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Hundt, 2012).

The Phase 1 Bat Survey was carried out and comprised of a daytime walkover of the site, internally and externally, to record evidence of any protected bat species.

Details of the survey methods are given below.

Bats

Phase 1 Survey Timing and Weather Conditions

Phase 1 Survey Equipment

During the Phase 1 survey the surveyor was equipped with 10x42 close focus binoculars and a high-powered torch.

RESULTS

Phase 1 Habitat Survey Results

Background Data Search

A desk-based assessment was carried out using the DEFRA MagicMap website <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> to identify all designated sites within 5km of the site and all other designated sites and protected species within 2km.

A search was made for information on statutory designated sites (often internationally and nationally important sites for ecology) and non-statutory designated sites (often important in a local context) within 1 km of the site boundary. The nearest designated site is Basingstoke Canal SSSI with is 82m to the north-west. Odiham Common SSSI is 1.3km to the west.

According to MagicMap, no protected species licences have been issued for Bats within 1.5k of the site.

The site lies within the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone as defined by DEFRA 2017.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The plot is situated to the north of Spratts Hatch Lane in a rural setting to the south of Winchfield Hurst.

PROTECTED HABITATS

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) Priority Habitats are also Habitats of Principle Importance (HPI) listed under The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Section 41 (NERC S41). These habitats do not receive statutory protection, but the S41 list is intended to provide guidance to decision-makers, e.g. those representing public bodies and local/regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act to

'...have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions'.

The woodland on the opposite side of Spratts Hatch lane is included in the priority habitat inventory as deciduous woodland.



Figure 1. Habitat map

The habitats on site include a hard standing, a small orchard (apple trees), overgrown shrubberies and extensive recently cleared bare ground (which had previously been overgrown by dense bramble). The southern boundary is a hedge dominated by tall holly trees.



Figure 2. Looking west across northern third of site



Figure 3. Looking west across front garden

PROTECTED SPECIES

Reptiles

All native British reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) from killing and injury. Sand Lizards and Smooth Snakes also receive additional protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 2010 from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. All native UK reptiles are UK BAP Priority Species and SPI.

There is negligible potential for common reptiles as the site had been completely overgrown and shaded prior to the scrub removal of winter 2022-3.

Amphibians

Great Crested Newts are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 2010 from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. In addition Great Crested Newts and Common Toads are UK BAP Priority species and SPI.

There is a pond 340m to the south-west. Amphibians such as Common Frog and Common Toad (UKBAP/SPI) may occur in the wider area, but there are no water bodies on site.

Badgers

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which makes it illegal to kill, injure or take a badger or to interfere with their setts; such as by the use of heavy machinery nearby.

No evidence of Badgers (holes, dung pits or push-throughs under fences) was found within the survey area, but a detailed search of the wider area was not conducted.

Breeding Birds

All wild birds are protected under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, from damage or destruction of their nest whilst in use or construction, some birds listed on Schedule 1 receive additional protection from disturbance during nesting.

Birds recorded on site included Great Tit and Robin and Stock Doves were calling from the roadside oaks.

The peripheral hedgerows and scrub have high potential for nesting birds.

Bats

Bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and also receive additional protection via The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2010) from intentional killing and injury and from intentional damage, destruction or obstruction of access to a place of shelter. It is an offence to kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site. A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place used for shelter or protection" whether or not bats are present at the time or not. Barbastelle Bats, Bechstein's Bat, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared Bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat and Lesser Horseshoe Bat are also UK BAP Priority Species and SPI.

Phase 1 Bat Survey Results

Setting

The bungalow was until recently surrounded by trees which were connected to the adjacent ancient woodland. The Basingstoke Canal is 82m to the north with open pasture between affording optimal foraging conditions for most native species.

Bats – trees

There is some potential for roosting bats in the large oak on the southern boundary.

Bats – building

The bungalow is a single storey structure with a pitched roof covered in clay tiles slates which are in good order. However, the wooden soffits are in poor condition with numerous gaps into which bats could enter (see figures 4 and 5).

The loft was accessed via an open hatch in the hallway. Five brown long-eared bats were present. There were only a few droppings visible on the floor of the loft which was partly covered in loose plyboard sheeting.



Figure 4. Northern elevations looking south. Red arrows indicate potential access points for roosting bats,



Figure 4. Western and southern elevations looking northeast. Red arrows indicate potential access points for roosting bats,



Figure 6. Loft with brown long-eared bats *in situ*.

EVALUATION, IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Protected Habitats

The plot includes a line of mature trees alongside Spratts Hatch lane.

The proposals would result in the loss of part of the semi-improved grassland and rough bramble dominated scrubby marginal areas.

It is essential that works do not impact the existing hedgerow trees. Foundation works must be carried out in such a way as to avoid impacting the root systems especially of the mature oaks.

Protected Species

Reptiles

There is negligible potential for reptiles to be present on site, which had been overgrown with trees prior to the removal and clearance of the site in winter 2022-3.

Amphibians

Common amphibians could utilise surface debris for refugia. A precautionary approach will be taken and any potentially suitable surface refugia affected will be searched and dismantled whilst also checking for any amphibians. Any found would be relocated to suitable refugia (log piles) at northern edge of the site.

Badgers

No badger activity was detected on site but badgers are known from the wider area. Therefore, good building practice should be followed (such as placing boards over holes or trenches overnight) to prevent animals being harmed during site works.

Breeding Birds

Any removal of structures should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, which is typically 1st March to 31st August.

If any works occur within the breeding bird season the area should be checked, ideally by an ecologist, and if any nesting birds are found there is a legal obligation to protect the affected area with a buffer zone of 10m until after the young have fledged.

Phase 1 Bat Survey

The Daytime Bat Assessment / Phase 1 Bat Survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

Five brown long-eared bats were present in the loft, therefore the bungalow is an active roost. Therefore, the property has high potential for bats and a phase 2 emergence survey is required.

A phase 2 (two viewers will be required in this instance) should be carried out in suitable weather between 1st May and the end of September.

Lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats and many bats. Any new lighting around the new stable must be focused away from the tree lines and new integral bat roosts, hooded or baffled to ensure minimal light spillage. Lamps of greater than 2000 lumens (150 W) must not be installed. Lights should not be directed at any areas where bats may use as entrance and exit locations.

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PHASE 2 BAT SURVEY

Level 1 bat license holder no. 2020-46400-CLS-CLS

JULY 2023

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TIMING AND METHODOLOGY

The surveys were conducted at dusk on the 12th May, 19th June and 2nd July 2023.

Surveyors were stationed to the east viewing the eastern and southern elevations and to the west viewing the northern and western elevations. Canon XA40 HD digital camcorders with IR illumination were also employed at each station (see figure 1). Survey commenced 30 minutes before sunset and continued until 90 minutes after sundown. *EchotouchPro*, *Echotouch*, and *Batbox Duet* detectors were employed to monitor and record bat activity. Walkie-talkie communications were maintained between surveyors to avoid multiple counting and help triangulate emergence and flight lines.

Survey Team

Dr. Jonty Denton is a licensed bat ecologist with over 25-years experience monitoring bats across England & Wales.

Ruby Denton Bsc (Hons) has over 5-years' experience, clocking up over 450 hours on Phase 2 emergence/re-entry and transect work, and has experience of 10 species across South-East England.

RESULTS

The night of the 13th May was suitable for bats being cloudy with a starting temperature of 15.5°C dropping to 14°C.

The night of the 16th June was suitable for bats being clear and warm with a starting temperature of 17.5°C dropping to 16°C.

The night of the 2nd July was suitable for bats being clear and warm with a starting temperature of 17°C dropping to 16°C.

The loft was also checked for bats on all three visits but there was no sign of any bat activity with no bats visible and no fresh droppings present.



Figure 1. Locations of viewers, cameras (Blue stars) (NB most of the trees are no longer present) (courtesy of Googlemaps)

SPECIES ENCOUNTERED

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

Singleton observed foraging along lane on 13th May

Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*

Singletons observed foraging along lane on 13th May and 19th June

Noctule *Nyctalus noctule*

High passes of singletons on 19th June and 2nd July 2023.

CONCLUSIONS

Though no bats emerged from the property, both common and soprano pipistrelles were observed foraging close by.

The brown long-eared bats present in the loft in February are thus best regarded as a transition roost.

As a number of bats were observed commuting and foraging across the site, lighting must also be considered as part of the proposal. Lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats. Any new lighting around the buildings must be focused away from the tree lines and hooded or baffled to ensure minimal light spillage. Lamps of greater than 2000 lumens (150 W) must not be installed.

APPENDIX 1. FIELD DATA

Project		Start time	20.10	Finish	22.15	Temperature	15 C at start 12.5 C at finish
	JD RD	12.5.23		sunset	20.45	Weather	10% cloud beaufort 0
Bat passes heard							
Station no.	Start time		No.	passes	comments		
SW	20.52	Common pip	1	1	Flew in from west along south hedge of field to west of bungalow		
SW	21.04	Soprano pip	1	1	Brief pass along lane HNS		
SW	21.44	Common pip	1	1	Brief pass along lane HNS		

Project		Start time	20.45	Finish	22.41	Temperature	17.5 C at start 16 C at finish
	JD RD	19.6.23		sunset	21.21	Weather	10% cloud beaufort 0
Bat passes heard							
Station no.	Start time		No.	passes	comments		
	22.01	Noctule	1	1	Brief high pass		
SW	22.05	Soprano pip	1	1	Flew in from west along south hedge of field to west of bungalow		
	22.30	Noctule	1	1	Low pass to southwest		

Project		Start time	20.45	Finish	22.41	Temperature	17 C at start 16 C at finish
	JD RD	2.7.23		sunset	21.19	Weather	10% cloud beaufort 0
Bat passes heard							
Station no.	Start time		No.	passes	comments		
	21.36	Noctule	1	1	Brief high pass		

