



MPECOLOGY



RE: MELKSHAM COTTAGE, STINCHCOMBE, GL11 6AR

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

By email attachment

Date: 24/11/2023

Background

MPEcology were contacted by Mr P Pridmore to assess the potential for a residential property to support roosting bats. The property was located at the western end of the small village of Stinchcombe in Gloucestershire (National Grid Reference ST 7340 9878). An extension to the northern side of the building is planned and further information to support a planning application had been requested by Stroud District Council.

The local landscape is influenced by its position between the floodplain of the River Severn and western fringes of the Cotswold plateau. The steep slopes of Stinchcombe Hill to the south and east are heavily wooded and provide optimal foraging habitat for bats.

Parts of Stinchcombe Hill have been notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its unimproved herb-rich calcareous grassland and scrub habitat associated with underlying Jurassic limestone. The habitats support notable plants, invertebrates and birds. At its closest point the SSSI lies approximately 320m to the south. Bats are not cited as a notable feature of the SSSI although it is well known that this part of Gloucestershire supports a rich bat fauna including Lesser and Greater Horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros* / *R. ferrumequinum*) and woodland specialists such as Bechstein (*Myotis bechsteinii*).

The closest recorded European Protected Species licences to the site were identified approximately 800m to the west and identified the presence of Greater Horseshoe and Lesser Horseshoe bats locally¹.

Site visit

A site visit and daytime inspection for bats was carried out on the 21st November 2023. The residential property was searched by a licensed bat surveyor in order to locate evidence of current or past bat roosts in the form of live bats, droppings, staining, feeding signs, and/or remains of bats.

Results

Melksham Cottage comprised a detached residential property with faux Cotswold blockwork walls and a roof of reproduction Cotswold stone tiles. Soffits were tightly fitted and sealed. The building lacked

¹ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

features with potential for crevice dwelling roosting bats and lacked access points for species preferring open loft voids.



Photo 1: The existing structure was found to be in a good state of repair.



Photo 2: Roof tiles were found to be tightly overlapped.

Internally, traditional bitumen roofing felt was evident over roof timbers and rockwool insulation was present within the loft void. No evidence of bats was found.



Photo 3: Roof void with chimney visible.

Assessment

No designated site will be directly or indirectly impacted by development activities. In terms of bat roosts, the structure was considered to offer negligible potential for roosting bats. The rationale for this was a lack of gaps and crevices at roof edges as well as the tightly fitting nature of the reproduction roof tiles.

Roosting bats are not considered to constitute a constraint to development and no further surveys are considered necessary. However, given the location of the building near extensive areas of woodland habitat it is recommended that a precautionary approach is taken during initial construction works. The roof should be stripped in the presence of an ecologist and if signs of bats are found, works should cease, and advice should be sought from Natural England.

Author

The author of this report was [REDACTED] an ecologist with over 20 years' environmental consultancy experience, a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv), full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and a licensed bat surveyor.

[REDACTED] BSc (Hons), MSc., CEnv, MCIEEM.

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24th November 2023