



PRELIMINARY ROOST
APPRAISAL

15 HEBDEN AVENUE, WARWICK
CV34 5XD

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1. INTRODUCTION

Location

1.1 The site is located at 15 Hebden Avenue, Warwick CV34 5XD. National Grid Reference: **SP 28521 66262**.

Site description

1.2 The site is a detached two storey dwelling. Immediate habitats are of low quality for bats and include suburban housing with gardens that support modified grassland lawns and scattered trees and shrubs. Wider habitats¹ are predominantly arable, although within 0.3km to the south lies the Grand Union Canal which offers good bat habitat and connects to patches of broadleaf woodland, and the River Avon and River Leam corridors.

Scope of Survey

1.3 A planning application is being prepared to extend the structure at the north elevation which will involve destructive works to the roofs of two existing single storey structures. Martin Ecology was asked to undertake a Preliminary Roost Appraisal for bats (PRA) in order to assess whether or not the proposals would impact them and find out whether or not a European Protected Species License (EPSL) would be required for the proposals to go ahead. The survey would also look for the presence of and potential for breeding birds to assess potential impacts.

Legislative context-bats

1.4 All species of bats are protected under *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*), *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* and it is an offence to:

- deliberately kill, injure, recklessly disturb or take bats;
- obstruct access to their roosts (or place of rest);
- damage or destroy bat roosts;
- Possess or sell bats unless acquired legally

1.4.1 Bats commonly use man-made structures to roost within and when undertaking building work in houses or other structures such as remedial work, extension, renovation or demolition there is potential to contravene the legislation outlined in 1.4.

Planning context

1.5 According to planning policy, prior to planning permission being determined it is expected that all survey work pertaining to protected species (and mitigation scheme if required) should be completed and reported.

1.5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that development should enhance the environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Licensing

1.6 The presence of bat roosts that will be affected by proposals that would trigger the above legislation (such as removal of a roof / roof tiles or demolition of a building) necessitates the application for EPSL from Natural England. Such licences permit activities

¹ Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> checked 16/1/2024.

that would otherwise be unlawful. Licences are only issued if three tests are satisfied, and these are:

- there is no satisfactory alternative
- there are overriding reasons of public interest and,
- the favourable conservation status of bat populations is maintained.

Legislative context-breeding birds

1.7 All species of wild bird and their nests and eggs are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*). This makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; and
- Intentionally take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

1.7.1 Schedule 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* gives some bird species greater protection against disturbance whilst breeding (including barn owl).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Building inspection

2.1.1 An inspection was made of the exterior of the building for signs of bats such as: staining, grease marks, urine, fur, feeding remains and droppings on windowsills and walls, or PRFs that might offer access for bats into the building (such as cracks and fissures on or around roof and ridge tiles, soffits, barge boards or brickwork). A one million candlepower torch, an extendable ladder, a Bosch GIC 120 C endoscope and binoculars were used to undertake the external inspection and all accessible features were inspected for bats or evidence of bats.

2.1.2 During the visit signs of breeding birds were also looked for within the building and also at the exterior. A photographic record was made of the site and some photos are included within Table 1.

2.1.3 Dean Martin (MCIEEM) conducted the survey work on 12th January 2023. Natural England bat licence number: 2015-10605-CLS-CLS.

2.1.4 Desk study

The building was assessed along with local habitats and considered to show potential for common and widespread crevice-dwelling and void-seeking bat species. Google maps was used to make a general assessment of the Site and local habitats. The government website (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) was checked for European Protected Species (EPS) licences issued by Natural England for bats within 2km of the Site which revealed licences issued for common pipistrelle bat and brown long-eared bat.

2.1.5 Constraints

None were identified.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Building inspection

3.1.1 The building was a detached, two storey brick dwelling that appeared to have been built during the late twentieth century. The building included a single storey section to the west elevation and this were clad with concrete interlocking roof tiles which were well-sealed. A single PRF was noted at the flashing of the west section where the lead as raised forming a small gap that bats could potentially enter. This was a minor PRF, and the lead was carefully lifted by hand to check for evidence of bats. None was present, and this was considered to be clear evidence that no bats or other animals had used the feature in recent years.



Photo 1 West section sealed



Photo 2 No evidence beneath raised flashing

4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No evidence of bats was encountered at the exterior of the building. It is considered that bats do not roost within the structure because there is a general lack of suitable PRFs due to the re-roofing which appears to have been undertaken in recent years (compared with similar adjacent properties).

4.2 The Site is considered to show negligible bat suitability, and consequently it is thought that bats are unlikely to be impacted by the proposals and no further surveys are recommended and an EPSL will not be required.

4.3 No evidence of breeding birds or scope for breeding birds was encountered, and so no mitigation is recommended.

Lifespan of this report

4.4 Should one year elapse from this survey being carried out without the proposals going ahead, a repeat 'top up' bat inspection will be required to obtain more up to date information on the bat roosts / breeding birds at the Site.

5. RELEVANT LITERATURE

Bat Conservation Trust (2023) *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*.

Schober, W and Grimmberger, E. (1993) *Bats of Britain and Europe*. Hamlyn.

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Stebbing, R. E. (1986) *Bats*. Mammal Society.