PRELIMINARY ROOST APPRAISAL

23 PLYMOUTH ROAD, BARNT GREEN B45 8JF

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1. INTRODUCTION

Location

1.1 The site is located at 23 Plymouth Road, Barnt Green, Birmingham B45 8JF. National Grid Reference: **SO 99217 74055**.

Site description

1.2 The site represents an extended single storey coach house. Immediate habitats include gardens that support mature tree lines and modified grassland which are of moderate quality habitat for bats. The local vegetation connects to better habitat[1] including thick hedgerows and patches of broadleaf woodland that in turn connect to a large area of woodland to the north at Lickey, and this comprises good bat habitat.

Scope of Survey

1.3 It is understood that planning application has been prepared to extend and alter the building which will involve destructive works to a coach house and adjoining building and demolition of a small porch. (drawings provided: 1241 – 01, 1241 – 02, 1241 – 03, 1241 – 04, 1241 – 05, and 1241 – 06). Martin Ecology was asked to undertake a 'proportionate bat potential assessment' as requested by the Local Planning Authority. As such, a Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA) to include bats and breeding birds was undertaken to try to determine whether the proposals would impact upon them and whether or not a European Protected Species License (EPSL) would be required for the development to proceed lawfully (see 1.6).

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 a derogation license from Natural England. Such licences

[1] Source: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx checked 23/10/2023.

permit activities 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-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.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Building inspection

2.1.1 A daytime visit was made to the site and the interior of the single storey buildings and adjoining buildings, and two storey section were searched for bats and evidence of bats (such as droppings, fur, feeding remains and roost exits). All accessible roof voids were examined, and the inspection was made using a ladder and with the assistance of a one million candlepower torch. All accessible potential roosting features (PRFs) where bats might roost were inspected for bats, or evidence of bats.

2.1.2 An inspection was made of the exterior of the buildings 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 and binoculars were used to undertake the external inspection and all accessible features were inspected for bats or evidence of bats.

2.1.3 During the visit signs of nesting birds was also looked for within the buildings and at the exterior also. A photographic record was made of the site and some photos (including any PRFs recorded) are included within Table 1.

2.1.4 Dean Martin MCIEEM conducted the survey work on 19th October 2023. Natural England bat licence number: 2015-10605-CLS-CLS.

2.1.5 The building was assessed along with local habitats and its potential for widespread crevice-dwelling and void-seeking bat species was considered. 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 granted by Natural England for bats over a 2km radius and revealed licences issued for common pipistrelle bat, soprano pipistrelle bat and brown long-eared bat to destroy resting places for these species.

2.1.6 Constraints
None were identified.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Building inspection

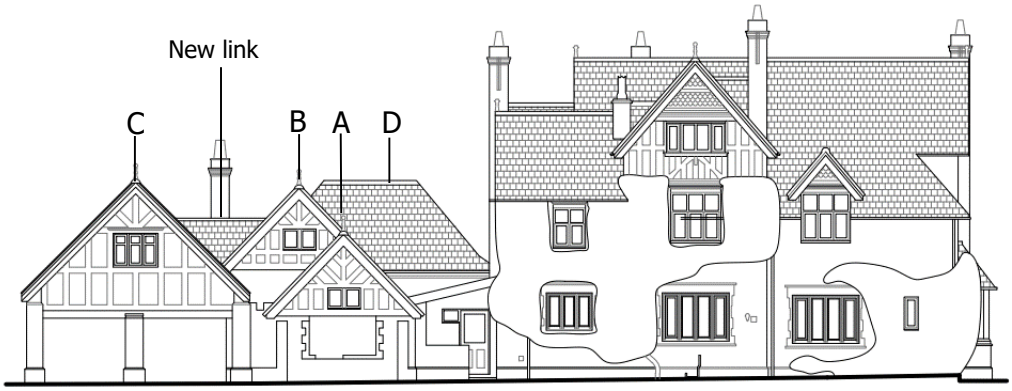
3.1.1 The building proposed to be removed comprised two sections (A, B), each with a pitched roof clad with clay plain tiles, and recently these had been re-roofed when an extension was constructed that adjoined the coach house at the south east elevation (C). As a result, the roofs were in a well-sealed condition and showed no PRFs. A and B each had windrows to the north east gables. The extension work was incomplete and the front of A and C were open which offered direct access for bats and birds to the interior of the structures. The rear south west of C was also open, and the gable was constructed of glass, and this included a gaps where the unit had not been sealed which also offered access for bats to the interior of the structure.

3.1.2 Inside the A and B it could be seen that the roofs were vaulted and had been recently lined with a breathable roofing membrane and the spaces were well-lit via the windows the north east gables. The ridge boards of each supported a significant amount of cobwebs which suggested that no bats had disturbed these features recently. The floors were boarded, and this supported dust that had settled over the last few years, although no evidence of bats was present on this or at the interior of the structures. B and C were linked together with a new flat roof construction, to make the space between A, B and C contiguous. The link was clad with clay hanging tiles, and these were well-fitted and sealed and showed no PRFs. C, which had been constructed within the last four years had a new roof supported by light weight timber trusses and this roof was lined with a breathable roofing membrane. No evidence of bats or breeding birds was present at the interior.

3.1.3 To the rear south west elevation was a two storey section to the house (D) which had a hipped roof clad with clay plain tiles and this included a roof light to the south west hip. The roof was in poor condition and showed many gaps beneath tiles because of this which offered potential access point for bats to the roof interior.

3.1.4 Inside the roof void it could be seen that the roof was original. The roof, typically of 1920 houses unlined, giving an uninterrupted view of the roof construction, and the tile joints were torched (filled with lime mortar) although this had crumbled away in many areas. Cobwebs hung over the full depth of the roof void and across the entire extent of the void. The floor was covered with fibreglass insulation which appeared to have been in place for many years, and this was covered in a thick layer of dust and detritus, although there was no evidence of bats at the floor or anywhere else within the void.

Figure 3.1



FRONT ELEVATION

Table 3.1

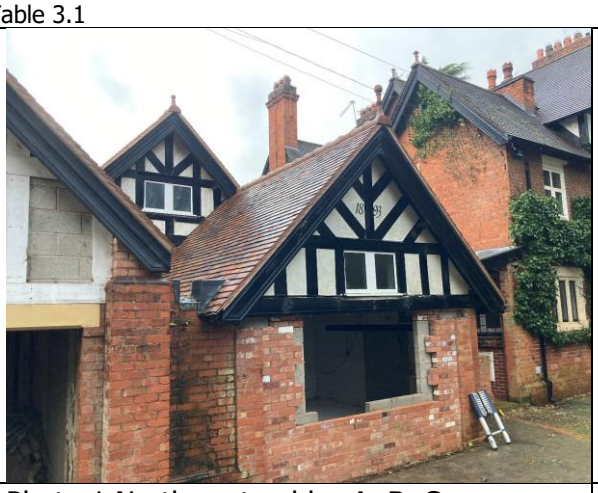
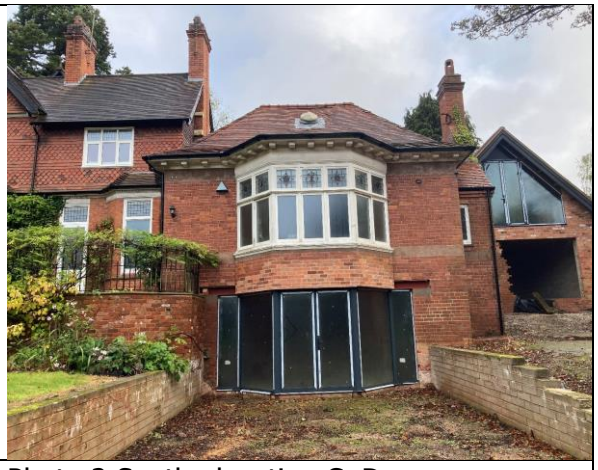
	

Photo 1 North east gables A, B, C	Photo 2 South elevation C, D

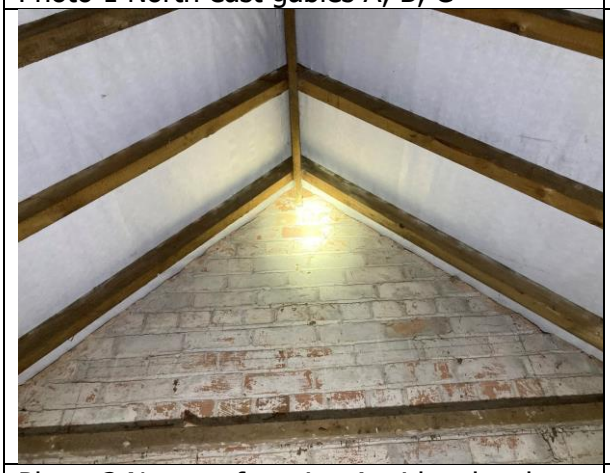
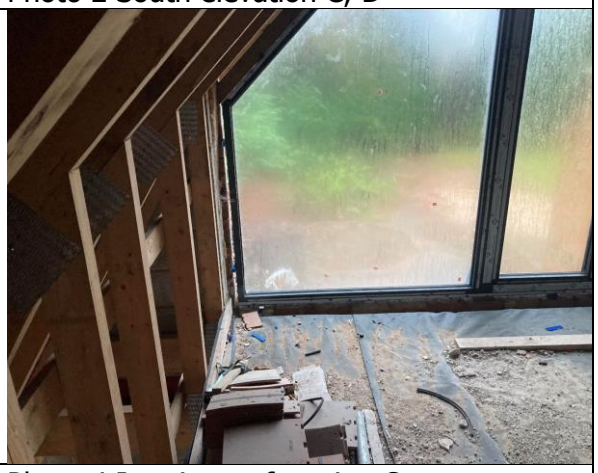

	

Photo 3 New roof section A with cobwebs at ridge	Photo 4 Interior roof section C

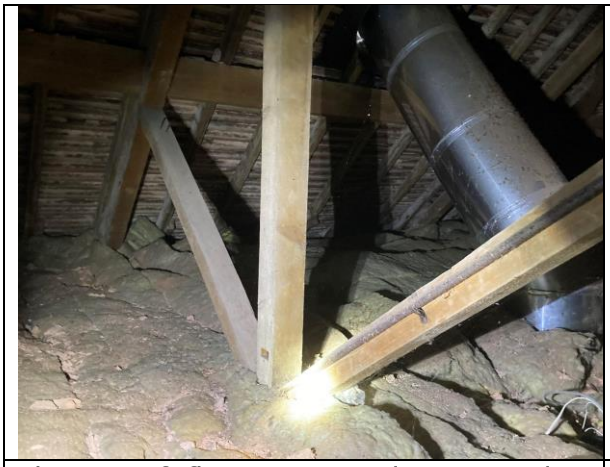
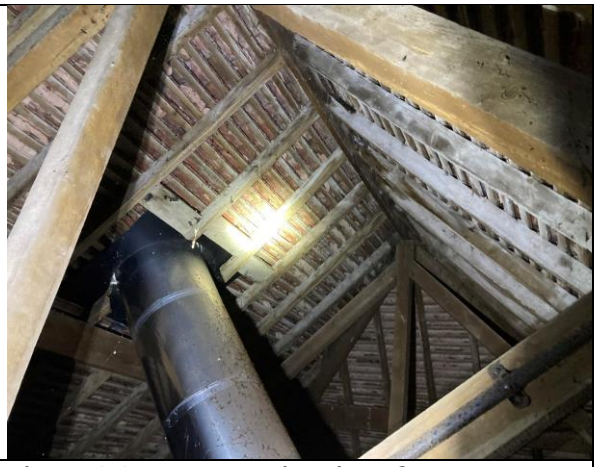
	

Photo 5 Loft floor section D dust-covered	Photo 6 Section D unlined roof

4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Bats

No evidence of bats was encountered for any of the structures. Although A, B and C are open and accessible to bats and birds, no evidence of bats or breeding birds was present, and in recent years the roofs of these structures have been replaced with no evidence of bats or birds having accessed the structures since that time, however the structures do have potential for bats due to their being open to the front and rear.

4.2 The roof of D was in poor condition with tiles raised that would allow bats access into the roof, however no evidence of this was present and it is considered that the building has potential for occasional opportunities use by crevice-dwelling species such as pipistrelle bats.

4.3 Currently, no further bat surveys are recommended (refer to 4.3 for potential future survey), although a methods statement (Appendix 1) will be followed prior to demolition and re-roofing to prevent any ingress by bats to the structures A, B and C and to safeguard any bats that may potentially ingress the gaps beneath tiles on structure D.

4.4 Breeding birds

The buildings have limited potential to support breeding birds, although swallows could for example currently have access to the interiors. The methods statement in Appendix 1 will prevent ingress by swallows.

Lifespan of report

4.5 If one year elapses from this survey being carried out without the proposals or similar proposals going ahead, a repeat 'top up' bat inspection will be required. The existing report can then be amended to report any changes or lack of changes to conditions found during this survey.

5. RELEVANT LITERATURE

Bat Conservation Trust (2016) *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines.*

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

Mitchell-Jones, A. (2004) *Bat mitigation guidelines.* English Nature.

Wardhaugh, A. A. (1987) *Bats of the British Isles.* Shire Natural History.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee, (2004) *Bat Workers' Manual,* Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

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

APPENDIX 1

BAT METHODS STATEMENT 23 PLYMOUTH ROAD, BARNT GREEN

The following precautionary measures will be adopted to ensure that bats will not be harmed during destructive works to the building, in the unlikely event that a bat is roosting within the structure during this time. A copy of details below will be made available to all workers and visually displayed on Site. A toolbox talk will be given to contractors by a licensed bat worker about where bats may be roosting. The talk will cover:

- bat legislation
- that the risk to bats is low
- bat safeguarding measures
- actions to be taken in the absence of a licensed bat worker
- best working practices

- Bright lights will be installed during November 2023 to the interior spaces of structures A, B and C illuminating all parts of the interiors of the buildings to discourage bats from flying into the structures and roosting. The lights will be left on for 24 hours a day, every day until all roof stripping works are complete. Furthermore, ply or similar material will be installed over the openings to prevent bats and birds from flying directly in to the spaces.

- Prior to destructive works to the roof of D, a licensed bat worker will carry out a check for bats of the roof interior. Should evidence of bats be encountered at this time, work will stop and further bat surveys of the Site will be undertaken between May and August to characterise the roost. In such a scenario it is likely that an EPSL application would need to be made to Natural England before works could commence.

- In the event no evidence of bats is found during the check, the bat worker will then oversee soft demolition of the roof. Should any bats be found during destructive works, work will immediately stop until the Local Planning Authority and Natural England (0300 060 3900) have been contacted for advice on how to proceed. In such a scenario it is likely that an EPSL application would need to be made to Natural England before works could recommence.

- Should any bats be found during works in the absence of a licensed bat worker, work will immediately stop until the licensed bat worker, the Local Planning and Natural England (0300 060 3900) have been contacted for advice on how to proceed.

- Any bats found prior to or during the construction period may cause a significant delay to construction works until a license has been issued by Natural England.

- In the unlikely event a bat is found injured, it will be placed into a ventilated box and taken to a cool, dark place.