

Ecological Assessment for Bats And Breeding Birds

Site Name: Garage at Rectory Cottage, Church Lane,
Lapworth, Warwickshire B94 5NX,

Grid Reference: SP 16284 71016

Date of Survey: 6th February 2024

DR PENNY ANGOLD
CONSULTANT ECOLOGIST

Report prepared by AMPA Associates Limited
penny@ampa-associates.com
Mobile: 07515 051 333

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A - Executive summary

There are plans for the redevelopment of the existing flat roofed garage and lean-to shed for an extension of living space at Rectory Cottage, Lapworth. The plans will not disturb the existing roof of the main house. This report provides an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on local bat populations, and on breeding birds.

The site was subject to a daytime survey for bats on 6th February 2024, using close focusing binoculars, endoscope and high-powered torch as appropriate to search for evidence of or suitable roost sites for bats, and evidence of or potential for breeding birds.

The property is situated in a good location for use by bats in rural Warwickshire. The property is surrounded by small hedge-lined pasture fields, with ponds, streams and small patches of woodland in the wider area. A variety of species are known to inhabit the wider area, including bat roosts that have been subject to licence within 2km of the survey site.

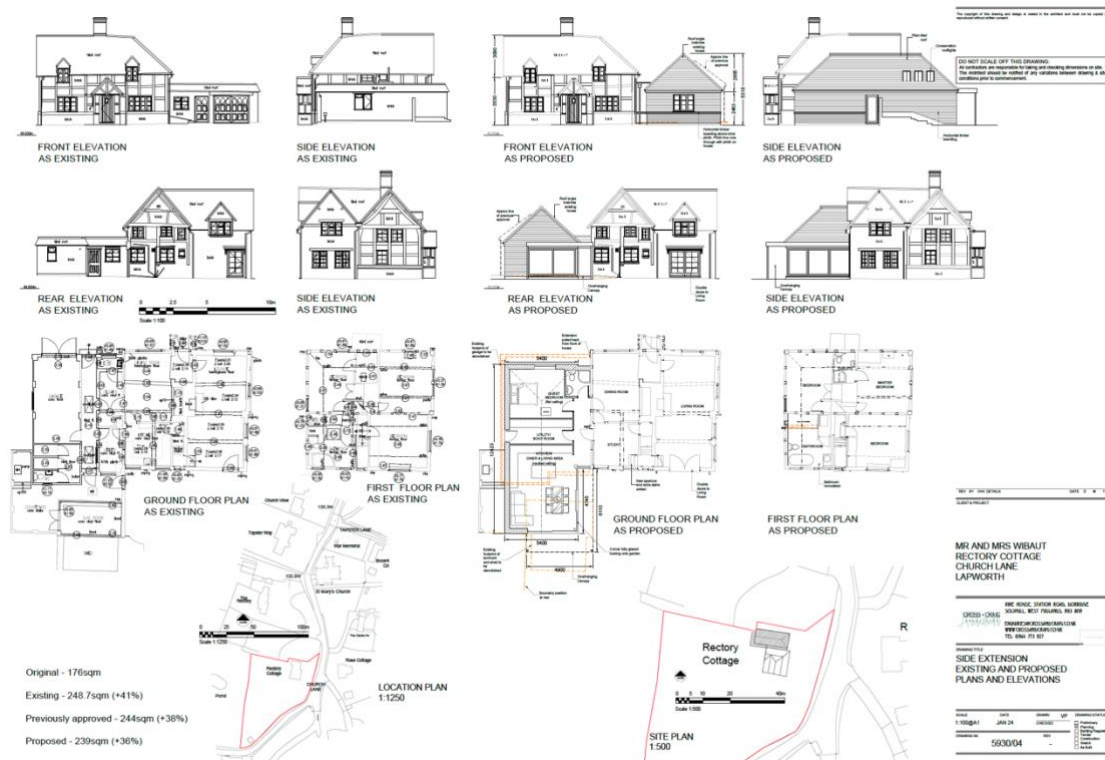
No evidence of bats or breeding birds was found during the survey. There are no potential roost features for bats in the garage, the lean-to shed or on the northern face of the existing two-story house roof. The second story house roof will remain unaffected by the proposed works.

As in 2019, there is no predicted impact of the proposed demolition of the single story garage and shed on local bat populations. No potential roost features and no evidence of breeding birds were found.

B – Introduction

B.1 Background to activity/development

The proposed works are an extension to the existing property involving the demolition and redevelopment of the existing single story garage and shed, but which will not disturb the existing second story roof structure of the house. The plans below were provided by the architect.



This ecological appraisal for bats and breeding birds will indicate any likely impacts of the proposed development on bats or breeding birds, and any ecological constraints or further surveys required in order to predict the likely ecological impacts of the proposed development. Any appropriate mitigation or enhancement measures will be specified in accordance with best practice.

B.2. Legislative Background

It is known that certain species of bats typically roost in buildings, and that a significant proportion of buildings may be used by bats at some time in the year. Bats are also known to use trees, caves and other crevices as places of rest or shelter.

All species of bat, both vesper bats (*Vespertilionidae*) and horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophidae*) are protected by law.

Bats are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (As amended) from being disturbed whilst occupying a place of rest or shelter; and under the CROW Act 2000 (which adds 'reckless' to 'deliberate').

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit Regulations 2019) continue the protections held under Habitats Regulations 2017 which state that:

'A person who

(a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European Protected Species;

(b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species

(d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.'

is guilty of an offence.

It also emphasises that disturbance, particularly includes disturbance likely to impair ability to breed, reproduce, or rear or nurture young, to hibernate or migrate, or to affect significantly the local distribution and abundance of the species.

Bats are a material consideration for planning with councils having a duty to consider biodiversity.

Therefore ecological surveys are often requested to inform planning applications.

Note: this is an interpretation of the legal position. For a definitive guide to the law, the reader is referred to the original legislation.

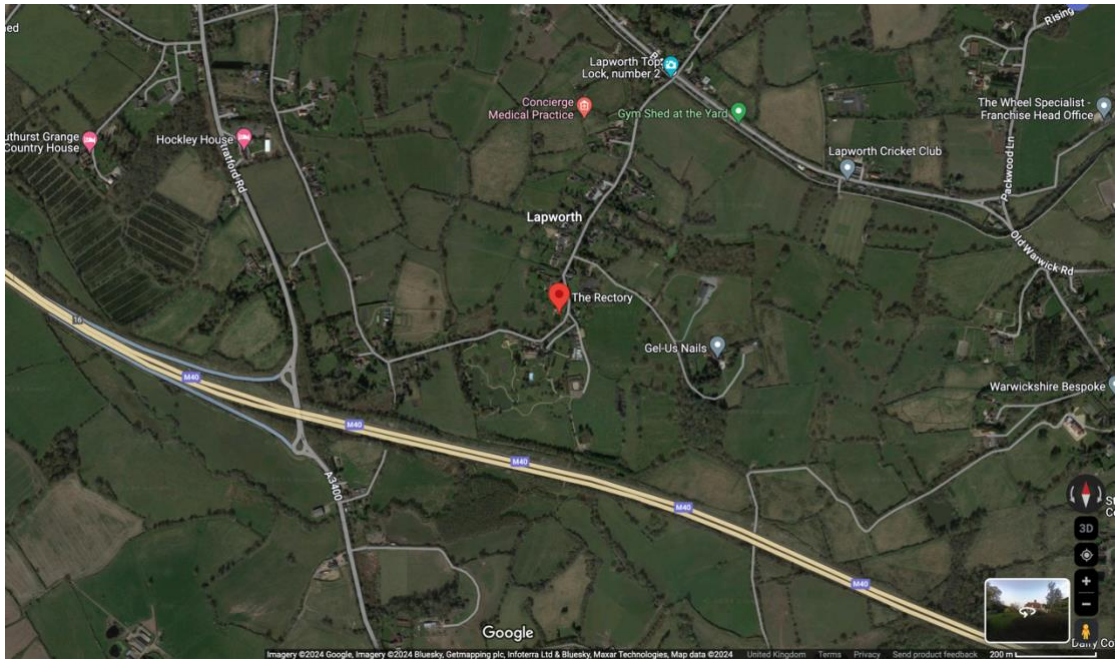
C - Survey and site assessment

C.1. Objectives of Survey

- To evaluate the potential importance of the building to the local bat population and identify any further survey effort required for evaluation.
- To predict the impact of the proposed development on local bat populations.
- To look for any evidence of breeding birds and predict the impact of the proposed development on breeding birds.

C.2 Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken using Google maps satellite views, NBN Atlas and the MAGIC website, as well as looking at previous local applications on the planning portal. There are no statutory protected areas for nature conservation on or adjacent to the site. The site consists of a detached house with single story garage and mature gardens in rural Warwickshire. The immediate area is dominated by small fields bordered by hedgerow and treelines, with small pockets of woodland. There are various ponds and streams in the wider habitat providing good potential foraging habitat for a range of bat species.



Google screenshot showing area surrounding the property (shown in red)

A search of publicly available bat data for the Lapworth area on the NBN Atlas revealed a brown long-eared bat and common pipistrelle bat roost recorded approximately 400 m to the north east (Natural England roost visitor records, OGL licence 2014). There are 3 records of soprano pipistrelle and 3 of common pipistrelle bats (National Trust CCO licence) some 1.75km to the north east of the survey site, and 9 records of soprano pipistrelle and 28 of common pipistrelle bats from the roadside mammals survey (Mammal Trust CC-BY licence) between 250 metres and 2km from the site. From personal experience of nocturnal surveys at the surrounding houses over the last decade, there is high summer activity of pipistrelle and noctule bats, with common activity from brown long eared and myotis bats in the general area.

There are no bat roosts subject to licence within a 1km radius of the survey site shown on the MAGIC website, but there are 4 sites with a history of licencing within a 2km radius of the site, including licences to destroy breeding and resting places of brown long eared, common pipistrelle, and soprano pipistrelle bats.

The known presence of bats within 300 metres of the site, and the good foraging and commuting habitat in the vicinity of the site show that the location has good potential for use by bats.

A bat survey of the garage and the northern end of the 2-story house was undertaken on 26th September 2019 by Cotswold Wildlife Surveys to inform a previous planning application, and the report is available on the planning portal. No evidence of bats was found, and the buildings were rated as having negligible potential for bats.

C.3 Scaled plan/Map of survey area



Google screenshot of the property subject to survey. Approximate site boundary shown in red

C.5 Field survey(s)

C.5.1 Survey Methods

A daytime assessment for bats was conducted on the 6th February 2023 by licenced bat worker Dr Penny Angold. The garage and associated shed were searched internally, and externally for potential for or evidence of use by bats, using high power Cluson torch, 4m ladders, close-focussing binoculars, mirrors and endoscopes as appropriate, in accordance with BCT survey guidance. Evidence would include droppings, urine splash, grease marks from fur, scratch marks etc as well as live or dead bats and assessing potential for bats in accordance with current guidance. The inspection included a search for any evidence of breeding birds, including nests, eggshells or evidence such as feathers or droppings.

C.5.2 Personnel

Experience of surveyors:

Dr Penny Angold CBiol, CECOL MCIEEM has over 18 years' experience of ecological surveying and holds Natural England class licences for Bats, Barn owls, and Great crested newts.

C.5.3 Constraints

The survey was undertaken outside the bats' active season, and at the very start of breeding bird season; but this poses no constraint on the results as the weather was good and any potential roost features or old bird nesting material could be easily seen and inspected.

C.6 Survey results

The building subject to survey is a single story garage on the north end of the house in a good state of repair, with an associated lean-to shed at the rear. No trees will be affected by the proposed works.



Garage building.

The site appears to be in the same general condition as during the 2019 bat survey, and the northern end of the main house roof remains well sealed with small, close-fitting tiles and no potential roost features for bats identified. There was no evidence of breeding birds, and the second story roof will not be disturbed by the proposed plans.



The garage is a single-story, flat bitumastic-roofed structure with a parapet roof 4 tiles high around the outside, topped by ridge tiles.



There are no potential roost features for bats and no evidence of breeding birds.

There are some gaps around the exterior tiles, with missing or loose tiles and raised flashing but these areas were able to be fully inspected and no potential roost features for bats, or potential nest sites for breeding birds, were found.



The interior of the garage was plastered, with the only potential access for bats being a gap above the garage door. There were mouse droppings, but no evidence of bats in the garage, and no potential concealed roost features for bats in the smooth walls.



Garage interior

The lean-to shed behind the garage had slipped and uneven tiles especially along the bottom of the roof, and the northern side:



On closer inspection, the gaps under these loose tiles were filled with debris and did not lead to accessible cavities for potential roosting bats or breeding birds:



The interior of the shed roof was lined with timber sarking. The shed ceiling was heavily cobwebbed, there were no potential concealed roost features for bats and no evidence of bats in the shed, although there were mouse droppings on the floor. There was no evidence of breeding birds.



D – Interpretation and Evaluation of Results

The property is situated in a good location for use by bats in rural Warwickshire. The property is surrounded by small hedge-lined pasture fields, with ponds, streams and small patches of woodland in the wider area. A variety of species are known to inhabit the wider area including roosts that have been subject to licence within 2km of the survey site.

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E – References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
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Report by Dr P Angold MCIEEM CEnv CBiol MRSB