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65 Highfield Close

Ref: ORB_3920_BG

Lapford

Date: 26 February 2024

Devon

EX17 6PS

Dear Mr and Mrs Noon,

Re: Bat and Bird Survey No Impact Letter – 65 Highfield Close, Lapford

On the 20th of February 2024, Orbis Ecology Ltd assessed the property '65 Highfield Close' for its suitability to support roosting bats and nesting birds. The findings are presented in this letter which can be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) as part of a planning application. The Devon Wildlife Checklist is included at the end of this letter should it be required by the LPA.

The assessment was undertaken by Bryony Gillett of Orbis Ecology Ltd. Bryony is a Registered Bat Consultant under Natural England Earned Recognition and has a level 2 Survey Class Licence 2015-14233-CLS-CLS BER0184 and is a Full member of CIEEM. The survey was completed in accordance with the '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists*' Guidance (2023) and the recommendations provided in this letter are in-line with British Standard 42020:2013.

Background to the legislation

All species of bat are protected under Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended) and are also protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. They are listed under Appendix III of the Bern Convention and Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive. Bats and their habitats are also listed under Appendix II of the Bonn Convention and therefore the UK has an obligation to protect their habitat, including links to important feeding areas.

It is unlawful to kill, capture, injure or take a wild bat anywhere in the UK. It is unlawful to disturb bats anywhere (roost, flights or foraging areas) in particular if the level of disturbance can be shown to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce or to rear or nurture their young or hibernate. It is illegal to damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting.

It is also an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection.

Proposed Development

It is proposed to construct a single storey extension at the rear of the property and to re-build the existing porch.

PRA Survey

The survey comprised a preliminary roost assessment for bats, based on guidance produced by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2023). A systematic search was made of the interior and exterior of the building to identify *potential* or *actual* bat access points and roosting places and to locate evidence of bat use. Evidence of bats could include live animals, carcasses, droppings and feeding remains. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence even inside of a building, particularly when there are concealed cracks, crevices and voids. The PRA includes an assessment for all roost types (summer day roosts, maternity roosts and hibernation roosts etc), with the structure categorised according to the description shown in **Table 1** below.

Evidence of the presence of birds (e.g. active nests, feathers, old nesting material, eggs or pellets) was also recorded.

Table 1: Categories for bat roost potential in buildings.

Suitability	Description
None	No roosting habitat features on site likely to be used by bats at any time of year (i.e a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by large numbers of bats (i.e unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool stable hibernation site.

Survey Findings

The weather conditions were overcast (12°C) with a moderate breeze. The property is located in a residential cul-de-sac in the rural village of Lapford, which is approximately 12km NW of Crediton. The village is positioned close to the river Yeo. Residential properties and gardens surround the property, with the river Yeo approximately 150m south of the property. The grid reference of the property is SS72950805.

The property surveyed is a detached bungalow, probably constructed in the 1960s. The bungalow is constructed from brick/block and is rendered with an interlocking concrete tiled roof. The facias and soffits are all plastic and are in a good condition. Internally, the roof is lined with bitumen felt and is insulated at floor level.

No evidence of bats such as bat droppings was found inside the void and none of the external features have gaps or crevices suitable to support roosting bats.

The property was therefore assessed as having **Negligible Suitability** for roosting bats. It is therefore considered the proposals will have a **negligible** impact on bats and/or bat roosts.

There was no evidence of nesting birds within the garage and there are no predicted impacts on nesting birds. All wild birds are protected under part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Therefore, in the UK it is an offence to:

- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is being built or in use.
- Kill, injure or take any wild bird



- Take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird.

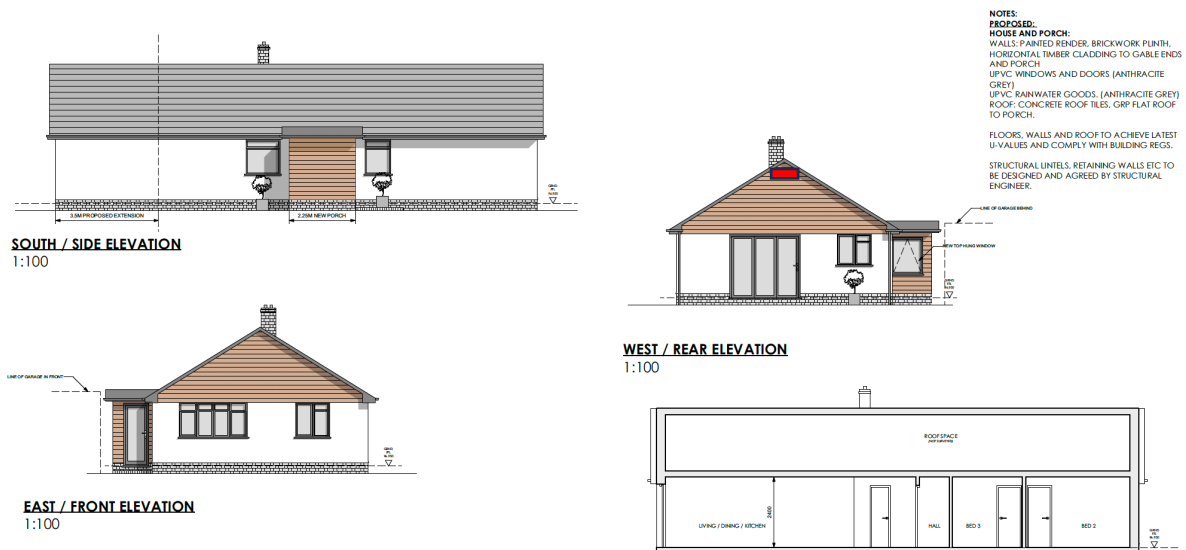
Recommendations

No further survey work is required. The works are not expected to impact bats. However, due to the small size of bats and their ability to roost in very small crevices, a precautionary approach to the work is advised. Roof tiles and fascia boards/soffits should be removed carefully by hand. If a bat (or signs of bats, such as droppings) is found then works should stop and a licensed bat ecologist should be consulted. Bats should not be handled unless they are injured, in which case using gloves, the bat should be placed in a small breathable container and advice sought from:

- Orbis Ecology 01626 638042 enquiries@orbisecology.co.uk

Provision for nesting birds should be installed onto the house in the form of a sparrow terrace on the new western gable end, in the location shown in red on the plan below. This should be the Vivara Pro dual chamber sparrow terrace available from www.nhbs.com. This house sparrow nest box is manufactured from woodstone - a mix of concrete and FSC wood fibres. This material is strong and highly insulating which helps to provide a thermally stable environment within the box. It also protects against damage from predators such as cats, woodpeckers and squirrels.

The boxes can be integrated into the masonry of a new house or fixed onto an external wall using strong screws and wall plugs (not included). If possible, it should be positioned near to vegetation and at a minimum of 2m above ground.



Yours sincerely,

Bryony Gillett MSc MCIEEM

Principle Ecologist

Orbis Ecology Ltd



Rear of the property to be extended





Example of roof and close fitting tiles



Devon Wildlife Checklist (to be filled in by the ecological consultant and included in the front of the Wildlife Report)

A.1 Protected and priority species (relates to question 13a in the planning application form).

A tick or cross must be placed in all boxes in column two (shaded) and then, where there is a tick, all other boxes in that row. Where species are present please email this form to Devon Biodiversity Records Centre - DBRC@dbrc.org.uk.

Location: 65 Highfield Close, Lapford **Grid reference for centre of site (6 digit):** SS72950805

Planning Application reference:

Name of surveyor and consultancy: Bryony Gillett, Orbis Ecology **Date that surveys carried out:** 20/02/24

Sent to DBRC: N

Species - terrestrial, intertidal, marine	Walkover shows that suitable habitat present and reasonably likely that the species will be found? <u>Tick or cross</u>	Detailed survey needed to clarify impacts and mitigation requirements?	Detailed survey carried out and included?	Species Present or Assumed to be present on site Indicate with P or A and name the species	Impact on species?	Detailed Conservation Action Statement included? Sets out actions needed in relation to avoidance / mitigation / compensation / enhancement	EPS offence committed? Three tests met?	Grid reference for specific location of species (if required for large sites)
Bats (roost)	X							
Bats (flight line / foraging habitat)	X							
Dormice	X							
Otters	X							
Great crested newts <i>(*check consultation zone)</i>	X							
Cirl buntings <i>(*check consultation zone)</i>	X							
Barn owls	X							
Other Schedule 1 birds	X							
Breeding birds	X							
Reptiles	x							
Native crayfish	X							
Water voles	X							
Badgers	X							
Other protected species	X							
UK BAP priority species	X							
Devon BAP key species	X							
Invasive species	x							

- Devon consultation zones for cirl buntings and great crested newts - <http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/wildlife.htm>
- UK BAP priority species - <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5717>

- Devon BAP key species - http://www.devon.gov.uk/dbap-section_e.pdf (note that this list is currently being updated)

A.2 Designations / important habitats / sites of geological importance (relates to questions 13 b & c in the planning application form)

A tick or cross must be placed in all boxes in column two and then, where there is a tick, all other boxes in that row.

Designation	Within site or potential impact. Tick or cross	Name of site / habitat	Detailed Conservation Action Statement included in report?	Habitat balance sheet included (showing area of habitats lost, gained and overall net gain)	Relevant organisation consulted & response included in the application?
Terrestrial, intertidal, marine					
<i>Statutory designations</i>					
European designations - Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR site or within Greater Horseshoe consultation zone	X		Sufficient information included for the LPA to undertake an HRA?		
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	X				
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)	X				
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	X				
<i>Non-statutory wildlife designations</i>					
County Wildlife Site (CWS)	x				
Ancient woodland	X				
Special Verge	X				
UK BAP Priority habitat	X				
Local Biodiversity Network (mapped by Devon Wildlife Trust / through Green Infrastructure work)	X				
<i>Non-statutory geological designation</i>					
County Geological Site (CGS or RIGS)	X				

- List of UK BAP priority habitats - <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5718>

Table headings last updated: 22nd September 2014

