AEWC Ltd

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Bat Assessment Report

Manor Barn

Lucas Green Road
West End
Woking
GU24 9LY

Brigitte de Coriolis

23-029
December 2023

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Summary

- AEWC Ltd were commissioned by Nye Saunders on behalf of their client to undertake a daytime bat assessment at Manor Barn, Lucas Green Road, West End, Woking, GU24 9LY at central grid reference SU 94457 60181 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on 24th October 2023 by Brigitte de Coriolis, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- The site comprises a detached residential dwelling and separate annexe set within amenity gardens.
- The proposal is for construction of a single-storey extension with a lower ridge height to the northern end of the existing annex, in addition to a small glass link constructed to connect the new extension with the existing eastern doorway of the house.
- The areas of the house and annexe subject to direct impacts under the current proposals are considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species and the proposed development. **Should the proposals change such that any areas of existing roof on either the house or annexe will be subject to impacts, the works must be fully discussed with a licensed bat ecologist in the first instance, as further surveys may be required to inform the updated proposals.**
- The small areas of climbing vegetation on the annexe are considered to have potential to support nesting birds, although no nests were identified at the time of survey. Any vegetation requiring clearance to facilitate the extension should be cleared outside of the nesting season (March to August inclusive). Should any clearance be required between 1st March and 31st August, this must be immediately preceded by a survey to check for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist. **No vegetation can be cleared whilst a nest is occupied, regardless of species.**

1 Introduction

1.1 AEWC Ltd were commissioned by Nye Saunders on behalf of their client to undertake a daytime bat assessment at Manor Barn, Lucas Green Road, West End, Woking, GU24 9LY to help inform the proposed development of the site.

1.2 The bat surveys and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023).

1.3 No ecological surveys are known to have been carried out for the site previously. Bat assessment was therefore required to ascertain whether bats, or potential for bats, is present at the site and represents a constraint to the proposed development.

1.4 This report details the results of the bat assessment and outlines recommendations in relation to bats and the proposed development of the site.

Aims and objectives

1.5 The objectives of the survey were to:

- Identify the potential of the buildings on the site to support roosting bats;
- Identify whether bats are present using the buildings on site;
- Estimate the size and status of any existing bat roost within the buildings;
- Determine the potential impacts on any bat roost from the proposed development schedule; and
- Provide information for use in the design and development of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures where appropriate.

Site Location

1.6 The proposed development site is located at Manor Barn, Lucas Green Road, West End, Woking, GU24 9LY at central grid reference SU 94457 60181. The site is located in a semi-rural location to the south of the village of West End and north-west of Bisley in Surrey. The surrounding landscape comprises pasture and woodland with connective mature tree lines interspersed with a low number of similar residential properties. Woodland within the Bisley and West End Commons LNR lies within 15m west of the site, connecting to an extensive area forming the Colony Bog and Bagshot Heath SSSI, Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC and Thames Basin Heaths SPA within 150m south-west of the site. See Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE SITE

1.7 The site comprises a detached residential dwelling and separate annexe set within amenity gardens.

FIGURE 2: SHOWING THE BUILDINGS SUBJECT TO SURVEY.

Legislation

1.8 All species of bats are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

1.9 A roost is defined as 'any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present.

1.10 Any disturbance of a bat occupying a roost can lead to prosecution. Disturbance can be caused by noise, vibration and artificial lighting. Penalties for breaking the law can include fines of £5,000 per bat, imprisonment and the seizure of equipment.

1.11 Furthermore, seven bat species (barbastelle, Bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe) are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Development proposals

1.12 The proposal is for construction of a single-storey extension to the northern end of the existing annex. The extension will have a lower ridge height than the existing roof and will therefore only impact gable end weatherboarding, with no direct impacts to the existing roof or verges. In addition, a small glass link will be constructed to connect the new extension with the house. This will connect to the house at the single-storey extension on the eastern elevation where the existing door is, again below roof height and only impacting weatherboarding and a small lean-to boiler cupboard.

FIGURE 3: SHOWING THE PROPOSED PLANS.

2 Methods

Daytime Assessment

2.1 A detailed bat building inspection was undertaken on 24th October 2023 by Brigitte de Coriolis, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.

2.2 A systematic internal inspection of the buildings was conducted using a high-powered torch to illuminate all areas thought to be suitable for roosting bats. Additionally, an external search around the perimeter of the buildings was conducted and any possible access points i.e. gaps and crevices were noted and surveyed with a high-powered torch and ladder as appropriate.

2.3 The building's suitability for bat roosting was assessed by examining structural features that may influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats; these include the presence of a roof void, the presence of access points into the building

(including gaps beneath barge boards, weatherboarding, soffits and facias, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry and under loose tiles, gaps between tenon and mortise joints), the complexity and size of any roof void and daytime light levels in the roof void.

2.4 The building's suitability for roosting bats was also assessed by examining the surrounding habitat. Important habitat features surrounding the structure which may influence roost potential include whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, its proximity to a significant linear habitat features such as a watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lanes or an area of woodland.

2.5 All surfaces were also surveyed for signs of bat presence. Features of potential value to bats were surveyed not only for the presence of bats but also for signs that could indicate use by bats, such as:

- bat droppings that are dry and do not putrefy, but can crumble away to dust;
- staining of access points used by bats to enter the structure; and
- feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings.

2.6 Taking account of these architectural, habitat features and signs of presence, the buildings were then assigned a level of roost suitability based the criteria given in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023) and professional judgement. The primary objective of this exercise was to identify the need for further detailed bat survey later in the year, or alternatively to obtain sufficient information that would dismiss the need for further assessment.

3 Constraints/Limitations

3.1 Bats are difficult to locate in large structures, with so many potential roosting areas, particularly in inaccessible areas such as large buildings, finding the exact roosting site can be difficult, especially male/single bat roosting sites. It should be noted that it is not always possible to identify bat presence by examining externally around buildings as poor weather conditions may have washed away droppings which were deposited on exposed surfaces.

3.2 Bats can have seasonal use of buildings and being so mobile may arrive and start using a site after it has been surveyed, or roost somewhere else during the period it was surveyed. For this reason, bats may potentially be present but remain undetected, particularly during daytime assessment.

3.3 The survey was undertaken outside of the primary active bat season therefore external evidence of the presence of roosts which may have been present earlier in the season may have been destroyed by weathering.

4 Results

Daytime Assessment

4.1 The annexe is a single-storey brick building in two sections, supporting pitched roofs of modern flat clay tile, with the roof of the southern section having a lower ridge height than the northern section. The walls of northern section are clad in modern feather-edge weatherboarding and climbing vegetation is present in several places. Externally the weatherboarding is in very good condition with no warping or lifting. The modern roof tiles are generally even and tight-fitting, although a low number of gaps were noted beneath slightly lifted or uneven tiles on both the east and west pitches. The ridge and verges were well-mortared, and the soffits sealed.

4.2 Internally, the southern section of the annexe is open almost to the apex, leaving an extremely small apex void with no access hatch to enable inspection. The northern section had a large void with a trussed roof structure. The roof is lined internally with a modern plastic liner and is insulated and boarded at floor level and fitted with lighting to enable use as a storage area.

4.3 The liner was in very good condition with no light ingress into the void, and the apex of the void was found to be cobwebbed throughout. No evidence of use by bats was identified anywhere within the void or around the exterior of the building.

4.4 The house is a Grade II listed, double-storey timber-framed building with walls of brick plinth and timber weatherboarding. The roof is half-hipped supporting predominantly slightly cambered clay tiles, whilst the single-storey prentice roof extension to the eastern elevation supports predominantly flat clay tiles with a low proportion of slightly cambered tiles incorporated.

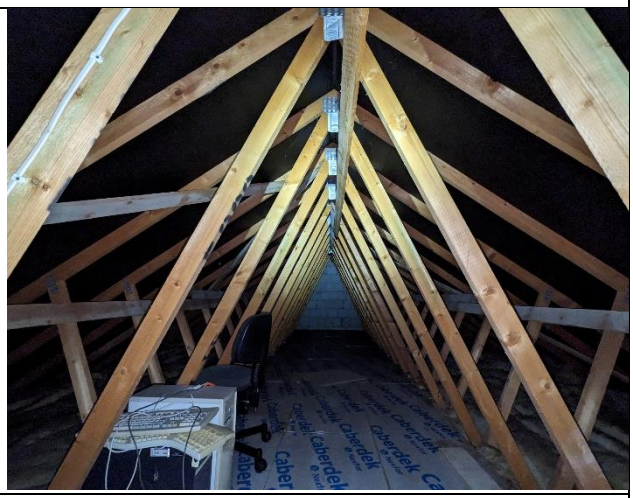
4.5 Gaps were noted present beneath cambered roof tiles across the main roof of the house, with only a low number of gaps noted present on the eastern prentice roof in addition to this area being mossed and frost-damaged, indicating cooler and damper conditions. Weatherboarding on the eastern areas of the house was found to be tight-fitting throughout with no lifting or warping of timbers.

4.6 The only impact to the main house will be the connection of a small glass link to the eastern single-storey extension at the existing doorway; the vast majority of the house is not subject to any proposals, and the main roof void was therefore not assessed for the current proposals. The single-storey areas on the eastern side of the house were open internally to the apex, with no loft voids present. No evidence of bats was identified externally around the house.

Photograph 1: *West elevation of the annexe*

Photograph 2: *North and east elevations of the annexe*

Photograph 3: *North gable of the annexe with tight-fitting weatherboarding where extension will tie in*



Photograph 4: *Loft void of the annexe*

Photograph 5: *Southern elevation of the house*

Photograph 6: *Gaps beneath roof tiles on the main roof of the house*

Photograph 7: *Eastern elevation of the house where glass link will join the pitched roof door area*

5 Evaluation, Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Initial observations consider the local area suitable for bats. Extensive woodland and pasture in close proximity to the site with a network of connective tree and hedge lines provides excellent foraging and commuting habitat for a range of bat species. Buildings and trees within the local area additionally offer potential roosting opportunities.

5.2 The house overall is considered to have high potential to support bats due to numerous gaps beneath cambered roof tiles throughout the main roof. However, the only area of the house subject to impacts is a small section of eastern elevation weatherboarding alongside the existing doorway, including the small lean-to boiler cupboard, for construction of a small glass link to the annex. No areas of roof or roof void will be subject to impacts, and all areas of weatherboarding to be impacted are tight-fitting with no possible access for bats into the batten spaces. **As such, the areas of the house subject to direct impacts under the current proposals are considered to have negligible potential for bats.**

5.3 The annexe is considered to have moderate potential to support crevice-dwelling bat species within the batten spaces of the roof due to a low number of gaps beneath lifted roof tiles on the east and west pitches. There are no access points for bats through into the roof void of the building for void-dwelling species, nor are there any access points into the batten spaces of the weatherboarding. The proposed extension has a lower ridge height and will not directly affect any areas of the existing roof. **The area of the northern gable end subject to direct impacts under the current proposals is therefore considered to have negligible potential for bats due to a lack of access points within the weatherboarding.**

5.4 The areas of the house and annexe subject to direct impacts under the current proposals are considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species and the proposed

development. **Should the proposals change such that any areas of existing roof on either the house or annexe will be subject to impacts, the works must be fully discussed with a licensed bat ecologist in the first instance, as further surveys may be required to inform the updated proposals.**

5.5 Lighting can have notable negative impacts on commuting bats, that are known to be present locally. There is potential for lighting during and post-development to cause indirect disturbance to bats within the local area. Additional external lighting should be avoided or kept to the minimum necessary, and preferably on a motion sensor to reduce lighting time.

5.6 Additional work lighting which may be required during the development must be positioned to ensure that it shines onto the area of works with minimal spread into the wider area.

5.7 In the unlikely event bats are found on site during works, the procedure detailed within Section 6 of this report must be followed.

5.8 The small areas of climbing vegetation on the annexe are considered to have potential to support nesting birds, although no nests were identified at the time of survey. Any vegetation requiring clearance to facilitate the extension should be cleared outside of the nesting season (March to August inclusive). Should any clearance be required between 1st March and 31st August, this must be immediately preceded by a survey to check for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist. No vegetation can be cleared whilst a nest is occupied, regardless of species.

6 Procedure to follow in the event a bat is found on site.

6.1 Bats are present within the vicinity of the site and may be found at any location on, in or around the buildings. Bats are protected species, and these procedures must be followed to avoid committing an offence.

6.2 If a bat is found at any location around the site DO NOT TOUCH unless necessary for the safety of the bat.

6.3 If the bat was uncovered in a roosting location carefully replace covering ensuring the bat is not crushed or harmed. If this is not possible cover the animal with a loose covering.

6.4 Stop all work at that area and the immediate vicinity. Work may continue at other areas around the site.

6.5 Call the AEWC Ltd bat licensed project ecologist Brigitte de Coriolis 07545130203, call the office on 08452 505585, or licensed ecologists Annika Binet 07528 956486 or Daniel Whitby 07764813002.

7 References

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