



PRELIMINARY ROOST
APPRAISAL

16 MILL HILL, BAGINTON
COVENTRY CV8 3AG

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1. INTRODUCTION

Location

1.1 The site is located at 16 Mill Hill, Baginton, Coventry CV8 3AG. National Grid Reference: SP 33928 75192.

Site description

1.2 The site is a semi-detached, two storey house with a detached single storey garage. Immediate habitats are of low quality for bats and include suburban housing that support modified grassland lawns, scattered trees and shrubs. These connect the Site better habitat¹ for bats within a short distance including: patches of broadleaf woodland, scattered scrub and the River Sowe corridor.

Scope of Survey

1.3 A planning application is being prepared to extend the property which will involve demolition of the rear garage, removal of the single pitched roof of the single storey rear element, demolition and replacement of the front porch and minor destructive works to the north west and north east hips to facilitate the new porch roof. (Plans provided: 0067-SI-002, 0067-SK-003D). A Preliminary Roost Appraisal for bats (PRA) was requested by the LPA to try to assess whether or not the proposals would impact bats 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)

¹ Source: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> checked 29/02/2024.

necessitates the application for EPSL from Natural England. Such licences 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 (including barn owl).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Building inspection

2.1.1 A daytime visit was made to the Site and the interior of the buildings was searched for bats and evidence of bats (such as droppings, fur, feeding remains and roost exits). All accessible roof void sections were examined, and the inspection was made using a ladder and with the assistance of a one million candlepower torch and a Bosch GIC 120 C endoscope. 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, 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.

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

2.1.4 Dean Martin (MCIEEM) conducted the survey work on 23rd February 2024. Natural England bat licence number: 2015-10605-CLS-CLS.

2.1.5 The building was assessed along with local habitats and their 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 within 2km of the site which revealed licences issued for common pipistrelle bat, soprano pipistrelle bat and brown long-eared bat.

2.1.6 Constraints

None were identified.

3. RESULTS

3.1.1 The house was a brick, two storey dwelling that appeared to have been built during the early to mid-twentieth century. The roof was hipped and clad with concrete interlocking tiles which appeared in reasonable condition and was well-sealed, showing no gaps that would give rise to ingress / egress points or PRFs or ingress points. The soffits were also well-fitted to the masonry showing no gaps.

3.1.2 Inside the roof void it could be seen that the roof was lined with traditional bitumen felt which had been retro-covered with white plastic sheeting. This was easily removed to check the felt and roof timbers beneath. Cobwebs were abundant around the roof timbers which suggested no bats or birds had disturbed the area in recent years. The loft floor was boarded and this was also covered in white plastic sheeting which supported a layer of old plant material, although no evidence of bats or breeding birds was encountered.

3.1.3 The ridge supported significant cobwebbing which was considered to provide evidenced that the ridge had not been disturbed by bats or other animals in recent years. The main roof was considered as having no bat suitability.

3.1.4 Adjoining the main structure at the south elevation was a single storey section that had a single pitched roof. This was covered with concrete interlocking tiles and was in reasonable condition, although PRFs were visible which were:

- Beneath the lead flashing where the roof joined the brickwork of the main house
- Where mortar had fallen away from the west verge

3.1.5 These features were thoroughly inspected by hand and no evidence of bats was encountered inside or around the features.

3.1.6 At the north east elevation was a single storey porch with a single pitched hip roof clad with concrete interlocking tiles. This was in good condition and no PRFs or ingress / egress features were identified. The house was considered to show no bat suitability.

3.1.7 To the rear of the house was a small, single storey, prefabricated concrete garage. This had a pitched roof clad with prefabricated fibrous board panels. Ingress points and minor PRFs were present where small gaps could be seen at the gable ends. No evidence of bats was encountered at the exterior of the building.

3.1.8 Inside the garage it was apparent that the roof was vaulted and no refuge areas for bats were observed or evidence of bats encountered. The structure was considered as having negligible bat suitability.



Photo 1 North elevation



Photo 2 South elevation



Photo 3 Porch north elevation



Photo 4 Cobwebbed roof timbers



Photo 5 Old plant growth loft floor



Photo 6 PRF rear single storey section



Photo 7 PRFs single storey section



Photo 8 Garage interior

4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No evidence of bats was encountered either at the exterior or interior of the buildings. It is considered that bats have not been able to ingress the house because it lacks suitable PRFs / ingress points, and that the garage is very limited in its suitability for roosting bats although PRFs / ingress points do exist at the gable ends.

4.2 The house and garage are thought to have negligible bat suitability, and consequently that bats are unlikely to be impacted by the proposals and no further surveys are recommended. It is recommended that the gaps shown in photo 7 are blocked / made good as soon as possible so that these PRFs cannot be used by bats or breeding birds in future.

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

4.4 Validity of data

Should one-year elapse from this survey being carried out without the current proposals or similar proposals being implemented, 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

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