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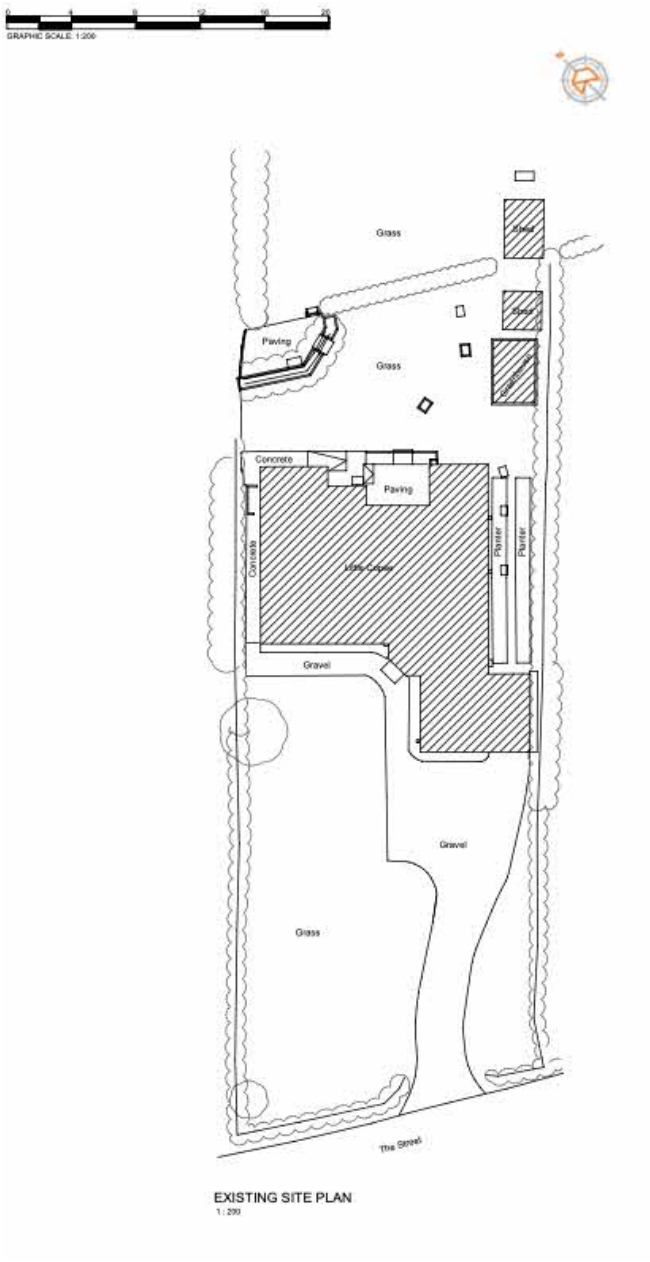
14th March, 2024

RE: Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment. Little Copse, Long Sutton, RG29 1SR

This letter outlines the results of a preliminary bat roost assessment of the Little Copse dwelling located off The Street, Long Sutton, RG29 1SR (located at OS grid reference SU 740 473 (Fig 1). This was requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) following proposals for renovations and modest extensions to the existing property on-site.

Figure 1. Current site layout



Methods

An assessment of all property on site was undertaken by Adam Jessop on the 12th March, 2024 under class level 2 survey licence number (2015-13366-CLS-CLS). This followed BCT (Collins, J. (ed) 2023) best practice survey guidelines searching for any PRFs / evidence of bat occupation and assigning a roost potential assessment as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of a built structure for roosting bats (reproduced from BCT (Collins, J. (ed) 2023).

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
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 individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions* and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger 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.

*For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

**Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2016 and Jansen et al., 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

Results

The main focus of this assessment was on the rear of the property as this is the area where there will be impacts to the roof from extensions (although the loft inspection covered the whole roof space). Internally, the loft space was large and relatively unobstructed with bitumen felt underling the roofing tiles (this was largely intact, although a few tears were noted) (Fig 2). No evidence of bat occupation was noted.

Figure 2. View of the loft space with this section the area that will be extended slightly (taken March, 2024). .

On the externals, the roof was formed from pegged clay tiles and as can be seen in Figs 3 and 4, due to the nature of these tiles, a number of PRFs were noted (the soffit box was uPVC and was well sealed against the external bricks work). The PRFs were all raised or slipped roof tiles including areas where the small flat roof section of the building had been tied into the existing roof tiles.

Figure 3. View of the roof section that will be removed for a new gable end with PRFs highlighted (taken March, 2024).

Figure 3. Additional PRFs noted where the existing flat roof section ties into the roof (this area will be impacted upon by the proposed works)

Evaluation

Following the conclusion of a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the Little Copse dwelling in Long Suttton, no direct evidence of bat occupation was noted (in terms of droppings or other evidence of occupation), although external features bats could use for roosting were identified.

Kind regards,

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Principal Ecologist

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