

AEWC Ltd

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Bat Assessment Report

Woodside

**Fyning Lane
Rogate
Petersfield
GU31 5DJ**

Annika Binet

**23-112
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Summary

- AEWCLtd were commissioned by Mark Carson and Thea Hickman to undertake a daytime bat assessment at Woodside, Fyning Lane, Rogate, Petersfield, GU31 5DJ at grid reference SU 81261 24400 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on 31st July 2023 by Annika Binet, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- The site contains a semi-detached two-storey dwelling with gabled roof supporting flat clay tiles. A single-storey hipped and flat roof extension is present on the western elevation and a mono-pitch lean-to extension on the northern elevation.
- The proposals for the site are not yet finalised but are likely to consist of demolition of the lean-to extension and construction of a further extension to the existing single-storey extension on the western elevation.
- The roof tiles were noted to be tight fitting and heavily mossed, particularly on the lean-to extension which is heavily shaded by the terraced garden and house. Soffit boxes were well fitted and tightly sealed. A very low number of slightly lifted tiles were present on the western extension, however a torch light survey found that gaps sufficient to allow access by bats into the batten space were not present.
- No evidence of the presence of bats was identified within the roof voids of the property or externally.
- The building was considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species and the proposed development.
- In the unlikely event bats are found on site during works the procedure detailed within section 6 of this report must be followed.

This report has been prepared by AEWCLtd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Professional Guidance and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWCLtd were commissioned by Mark Carson and Thea Hickman to undertake a daytime bat assessment at Woodside, Fyning Lane, Rogate, Petersfield, GU31 5DJ 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, 2016).
- 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;
 - 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 Woodside, Fyning Lane, Rogate, Petersfield, GU31 5DJ at grid reference SU 81261 24400. The site is located in the South Downs National Park, to the north of Fyning in an area of low-density housing in an otherwise rural landscape. The site sits just within an extensive area of mixed mature woodland, with good connectivity through arable land and pasture to the south. See Figure 1.

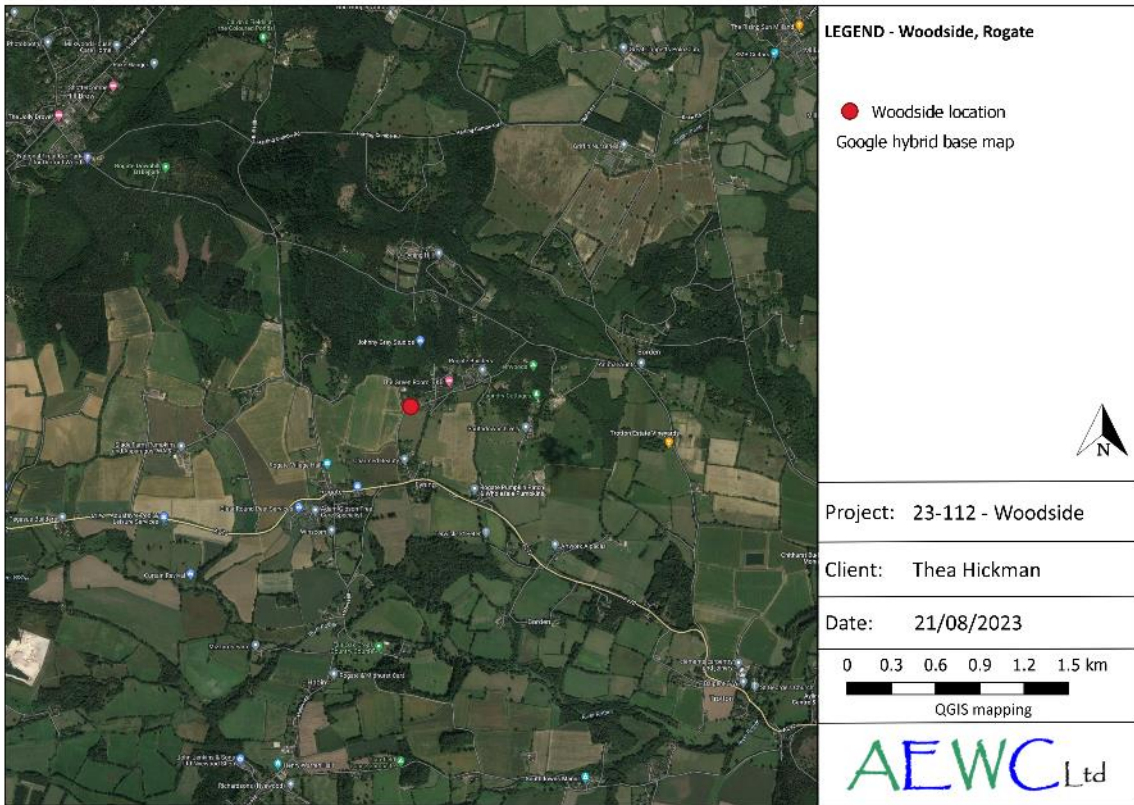


FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE SITE

1.7 The site consists of a semi-detached property with separate garage situated within an amenity garden.



FIGURE 2: SHOWING THE BUILDING 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 for the site are not yet finalised but are likely to consist of demolition of the lean-to extension and construction of a further extension to the existing single-storey extension on the western elevation.

2 Methods

Daytime Assessment

- 2.1 A detailed bat building inspection was undertaken on the 31st July 2023 by Annika Binet, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- 2.2 A systematic internal inspection of the building 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 building 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 fascias, 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 building was then assigned a level of roost suitability based the criteria given in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016) 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.

4 Results

Daytime Assessment

- 4.1 The site contains a semi-detached two-storey dwelling with gabled roof supporting flat clay tiles. A single-storey hipped, and flat roof extension is present on the western elevation and a mono-pitch lean-to extension on the northern elevation.
- 4.2 The roof tiles were noted to be tight fitting and heavily mossed, particularly on the lean-to extension which is heavily shaded by the terraced garden and house. Soffit boxes were well fitted and tightly sealed. A very low number of slightly lifted tiles were present on the western extension, however a torch light survey found that gaps sufficient to allow access by bats into the batten space were not present.
- 4.3 The roof void of the main house is in use for living space with dormers present on the southern roof pitch. Small roof voids are present within the apex of the void in addition to at the eaves. The eaves voids were not accessible for survey due to a lack of access panels. The void in the apex was found to contain the water tanks with fibreglass insulation filling the majority of the rest of the space within this void. Heavy cobwebbing was noted present at the ridge.
- 4.4 A storage loft is present above the single storey extension, the roof felt was noted to be in good condition with no splits or gaps noted. No natural light ingress was noted within the roof void. Some cobwebbing was present at the hips.
- 4.5 No evidence of the presence of bats was identified within the roof voids of the property or externally.



Photograph 1: *Northern elevation*



Photograph 2: *Southern elevation*



Photograph 3: *Roof void in the apex of the main house*



Photograph 4: *Storage loft above the single storey extension*

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 No evidence of the use of the site by roosting bats was identified during the survey and the daytime assessment identified negligible potential for roosting bats within the property due to a lack of suitable access points or roosting spaces.
- 5.3 The building was considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species and the proposed development.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 In the unlikely event bats are found on site during works, the procedure detailed within section 6 of this report must be followed.

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

- 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 Annika Binet 07528 956486, call the office on 08452 505585, or licensed ecologists Daniel Whitby 07764813002 or Brigitte de Coriolis 07545130203.

7 References

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