Bat and Bird Survey of 75 Westgate Road, Chichester

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NATURAL SOLUTIONS

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Non-technical Summary

Background

In November 2022, Crossman Associates was commissioned by CGA Architecture to undertake a bat and bird scoping survey of 75 Westgate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 3HA. Proposals are to enlarge the dwelling via two storey side extension and loft conversion, which will include a new dormer window.

Methodology

The scoping survey was undertaken by Fairbrass Knowles, a fully licensed bat worker, full member of CIEEM and experienced ecologist. The dwelling was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats. The dwelling was also checked for nesting birds. A evening emergence survey was completed in May 2023.

Results

The dwelling is a C. 1940's semi-detached 3-bedroom dwelling which has historically been enlarged with a flat roofed ground floor extension that provides a single bay garage and extends living accommodation. Supporting walls are a combination of well-pointed brick, render with a small panel of decorative hanging tile on the front elevation. The main roof is a simple hipped design clad with flat clay peg tiles. A number of the hips and ridges are no longer well cemented in place and these combined with the hanging tile provide bats with Low Roosting Suitability. Adjacent habitats are suburban but may support more urban tolerant bats.

A single evening emergence survey confirms likely absence of roosting bats.

Recommendations

Before works commence it is recommended that one bat activity survey is undertaken. The survey should be carried out between May and August and will confirm likely presence/absence of roosting bats.

Ecological enhancements should include new bird nesting opportunities.

75 Westgate,
Chichester,
West Sussex.

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1. Background

1.1. In November 2022, Crossman Associates was commissioned by CGA Design Ltd to undertake a bat and bird survey of 75 Westgate Road, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 3HA; site Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 8527 0477.

1.1. Figure 1 within Appendix I provides a site location map.

1.3. The objectives of the survey were to:

Assess the likely presence or absence of bats and birds

Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site

Determine the need for further surveys, compensation, or mitigation

Site Description

1.1. 75 Westgate Road is a C.1940's two storey, 3-bedroom semi-detached dwelling that has historically been enlarged via a flat roof extension that wraps around the eastern side and extending around to the rear; southern elevation, the extension provides a combined single bay garage / extended living accommodation. Supporting walls are a combination of well-pointed brick and render with a small panel of decorative hanging tile forming a panel in-between a ground floor and first floor bay window on the front, northern elevation.

1.3. The main roof is a simple hipped design clad with clay peg tiles, with simple half round tiles capping the ridges and hips. The extension has a simple felt flat roof.

1.3. The dwelling has small front and rear gardens which are well maintained.

1.3. The property occupies a residential area on the south-west side of Chichester and immediate and wider surroundings to the north, east and west dominated by areas of urbanisation that are made up by residential areas. Dwellings tend to have small gardens that collectively provide a green element. To the south lays a large industrial estate, beyond lays farmland and the village of Stockbridge to the south-east.

1.3. No areas of significant woodland / watercourses lay close by.

Proposals

1.3. Proposals are to enlarge the dwelling by adding a two-storey extension to the eastern elevation and converting the loft to extended living accommodation which will also include the fitment of 1 number dormer to the roofs southern elevation.

Legislation

1.10. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this legislation the UK is obliged to fully take into account bats within the planning process and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.

1.11. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

2. Methodology

Desktop Study

Data search

2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

Planning Policy

2.2. National Planning Policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

2.1. The dwelling was methodically inspected internally and externally for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases.

2.2. The dwelling was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;

Confirmed Roost- Actual presence of bats or evidence of bats, bats do not need to be present for roost confirmation.

High Suitability – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural

Moderate Suitability – some roosting opportunities. Building tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance

Low Suitability – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained

Negligible Suitability – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

Evening emergence/ activity surveys

2.1. One evening emergence/ activity survey was carried out by two bat surveyors led by experience and licenced bat worker Miguel Canovas. The surveyors were positioned so that all aspects of the building suitable for roosting bats could be observed. The Survey was undertaken during suitable weather conditions. The emergence survey commenced at sunset and continued for two hours. All general bat activity on site was also noted.

2.1. Echo meter touch and Elekon batscanner bat detectors and and IR cameras were used together with visual observations on flight patterns and feeding behaviour to aid identification to species level. Recordings of bat calls were made and later analysed using dedicated computer software Audacity and wildlife acoustics.

2.2. The survey was undertaken by Miguel Canovas (licenced) and Toby Bowman.

Birds

2.1. The dwelling was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus* and barn swallow *Hirundo rustica.* The dwelling was checked

for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

3. Results

Desktop Study

Data Search

2.1. The MAGIC website informed of no site designated for bats within 4km of the site.

Planning Policy

2.1. National policy guidance is provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government' planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Habitats and Biodiversity

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

2.1. Survey work was undertaken by Fairbrass Knowles an experienced ecologist, full member of CIEEM and fully licensed bat worker, (licence number 12392 CLS-CLS) and took place on 2 December 2022. The dwelling was fully accessible.

2.1. The external and internal conditions of the barn is described in the table below and photographic reference can be found within Appendix II.

2.1. A table within Appendix III; information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

2.1. Figure 2 under Appendix I provides a site overview.

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
75 Westgate Road, Chichester	Overview	75 Westgate Road is a C.1940's two storey, 3-bedroom semi-detached dwelling that has historically been enlarged via a flat roof extension that wraps around the eastern side and extending around to the rear; southern elevation, the extension provides a combined single bay garage / extended living accommodation. Supporting walls are a combination of well-pointed brick and render with a small panel of decorative hanging tile forming a panel in-between a ground floor and first floor bay window on the front, northern elevation. The dwelling remains sound but is showing signs of a general lack of recent maintenance. The dwelling has only recently become vacant and is currently undergoing internal decorating works.	Low suitability ☒
	Exterior	Walls are of well pointed brick and render which provide no significant cracks or holes. Windows and doors all remain in excellent condition and all fit well within their respective reveals. The garage has a standard up and over steel garage door, which shuts well when closed. <u>Hanging tile</u>	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
		A small, curved panel of decorative hanging tiles occupies the space between a ground floor and first floor bay window on the dwellings front; northern elevation. All tiles are present but significant crevices are present which lead to the hidden, shallow cavity that lays behind and that is created by the battens to which the tiles are hung from; this is typical and not a building defect. Refer to photograph 1. During the survey no bats or evidence of bats was found to be present.	
	Interior	Areas of living accommodation are composed of well-decorated rooms. The small single bay garage has a simple layout with a flat plaster ceiling and well-sealed walls. The garage does not provide bats with roosting suitability. <u>Roof void</u> The dwelling is has a single roof void which is created from a rectangular shaped, standard style timber cut and pitch roof using simple timber beams that lack any complex carpentry, with a floor	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
		to ridge height of approximately 3.5 m. Unusually there is no sarking layer present what's so ever and the underside of the roof tiles / battens are all on show, this results in a very draughty setting with very significant draughts noted during the survey. The party wall is of well pointed brick as is a large chimney that passes up through the roof void. The roof void allowed good access, during which no bats, bat droppings or any other bat evidence was found to be present.	
	Roof	<u>Main roof</u> The roof is a simple double pitched hipped design clad with flat style clay peg tiles and simple half round clay tiles used to cap the ridge and hips. All tiles are present and the flat peg tiles tend to fit sufficiently close together as to create no significant crevices. The ridge and hip tiles while all present, are old and a number are no longer well cemented in place, revealing a number of small, but significant crevices where the mortar has fallen away. These crevices provide small crevice dwelling bats; typically common	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
		pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* with potential access to the hollow into cavity of the tile. Refer to photograph 7. The eaves are fitted with simple soffits that all remain in good order and all fit well, providing no significant crevices. Roof verges remain well filled with mortar. The two chimneys look to be in good order including the lead flashings that seal the chimney base to the roof tiles. <u>Flat roofed extension</u> The roof is a simple flat design clad with bituminous felt which remains in good condition. The edges are folded tight along the eaves, where simple uPVC facias help hold it in place. During the survey no bats or evidence of bats was found to be present in association with either roof.	

Bat emergence survey

2.1. The buildings have been assessed to offer Low Suitability for roosting bats, therefore, in line with survey guidance (2016), one evening emergence survey was undertaken on 23rd May 2023.

2.1. The table below details the results of the survey.

Table 2; Bat emergence table

Survey Date	11/05/2023
Survey Conditions	Cloud: 30% Weather: Dry Wind level 1 Start temp 13^{0}C End temp 12^{0}C Sunset time 20.40
Emergence survey	No bat emergence
General bat activity. Non emergence	21.13 A pass by a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* in neighbouring garden 21.13 fofaging activity: common pipistrelle in neighbouring garden

Birds

2.1. No birds or nests were found to be present in association with the dwelling

Evaluation

Bats

Dwelling

3.10. Potential Roosting Features (PRF's) are restricted to the ridge and hip tiles of the main roof where a number are no longer well cemented in place and the panel of hanging tile on the front, northern elevation. The identified crevices have the potential to provide small crevice dwelling bats with access to the inner, hidden recesses beneath / behind the tiles. Refer to photographs 1 & 7.

3.10. Current proposals will result in significant disturbance to the roof which if a bat roost were to be present and works were un-mitigated may lead to an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

3.10. The panel of hanging tile will remain in place and will not be affected by the current proposals.

3.10. Due to the disturbed nature of the site, which is a dwelling, the residential setting, which provides bats with sub-optimal foraging habitat and the closeness of the road, bat roosting suitability is reduced and the dwelling is assessed to provide bats with Low Roosting Suitability.

3.10. The evening emergence survey did not identify any bats exiting the house, which confirms likely absence of roosting bats.

Bat Habitat

3.10. Immediate habitats, whilst not optimal for bats, may support more urban / light tolerant bats, typically common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus.* This species is well known to forage in association with domestic gardens, which collectively provide useful habitat for this species. This species is well known to use crevices associated with dwellings e.g., loose tiles, hanging tiles and gappy soffits as a roosting location.

4. Recommendations

4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are provided to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.

4.1. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.

4.3. Under the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

Species recommendations

Bats

4.4. All bats within the UK are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as Amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under this registration there are strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb, damage or destroy the resting place (roost) of a bat. Under the Bonn Convention, the UK is obliged through the planning system to protect important bat habitats.

4.1. Due to the lack of evidence of roosting bats within any aspect of the buildings on site, it is not considered necessary or beneficial to undertake any further survey work.

Precautionary works

4.3. Bats are transient in nature and can occasionally take up sites on an occasional or transient basis. There is a small possibility that bats could be encountered during works; therefore, all works must proceed under a cautionary approach. Tiles and roof panels will be removed in a vertical rather than horizontal sliding motion. Soffits and masonry will be dismantled using a 'soft' approach taking care with cavity walls where present. All site workers will be vigilant at all times and in the very unlikely event that a bat is found then works must stop immediately and advice should be sought from Crossman Associates or Natural England (telephone number 0300 0603900).

Hedgehog

4.4. In the UK hedgehogs are listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as Amended which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are also listed as a species of 'principal importance' under the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006, which is meant to confer a 'duty of responsibility' to public bodies.

4.3. The site provides potential habitat for hedgehogs *Erinaceous europaeus* which may present within the general vicinity.

4.3. Excavated holes and trenches on building sites have the potential to trap wildlife including hedgehogs leading to the potential suffering and death of the animal (s) particularly if they become filled with water.

4.10. If during the development excavated holes / trenches are likely to be left open, then timber builders' planks should be fitted as ramps to enable any wildlife including hedgehogs a means of escape.

4.11. An information leaflet on hedgehogs is provided under Appendix III.

Ecological enhancements

Birds

4.11. New nesting opportunities should be provided for house sparrows (which have suffered significant decline), and the new extension should be fitted with 1 number sparrow nest box.

4.10. Integrally fitted models should be used and can be constructed into the outer wall of the extension as it is built. Alternative models are available for surface mounting. Sparrow nest boxes are ideally fitted below eaves or on gable walls, ideally on north or easterly elevations. Suitable models include the Schwegler 1SP, which is suitable for both integral and surface fitment. This model is strong, durable, long lasting and available in brown or stone colour. Other models are available from www.habibat.co.uk and www.vivara.co.uk An information sheet on integral bird nesting boxes is included in Appendix III.

4.11. Bird boxes are available from www.wildlifeservices.co.uk telephone number 0333 9000 92. Further models are supplied by Habibat www.habibat.co.uk telephone number 01642 724626.

4.10. The siting of the bird boxes should be completed in consultation with a suitably qualified ecologist.

5. Limitations

2.1. This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit.

2.1. This report represents a preliminary assessment only. Recommendations and conclusions are subject to change should further findings significantly differ from those collected from the survey efforts to date.

2.1. The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

6. References

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) *Bats and Lighting in the UK* BCT

HMSO (1981) *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and subsequent amendments).* HMSO

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Mitchell-Jones, A.J (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

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Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Website at www.magic.gov.uk

Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles 2nd Edition.* Cambridge University Press

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TSO (2006) *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* TSO

Appendix I –Site Figures

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● Site location

Client	CGA Architecture
Title	Location plan
Site	75 Westgate Road, Chichester
Figure	1
Date	07 December 2022
Scale	Not to scale

Appendix II – Site Photographs

Photographs 1- 3

Photograph 1:

Front; north elevation.

A panel of hanging tiles occupies the space between the ground foor and frst foor bay windows. The hang tiles provide signifcant crevices that provide bats with potentail access to the shallow hidden cavity that lays behind the tiles.

Also shown is the front of the garage.

Photograph 2:

Rear; south elevation.
Shown also is the rear of the fat roofed ground foor extension.

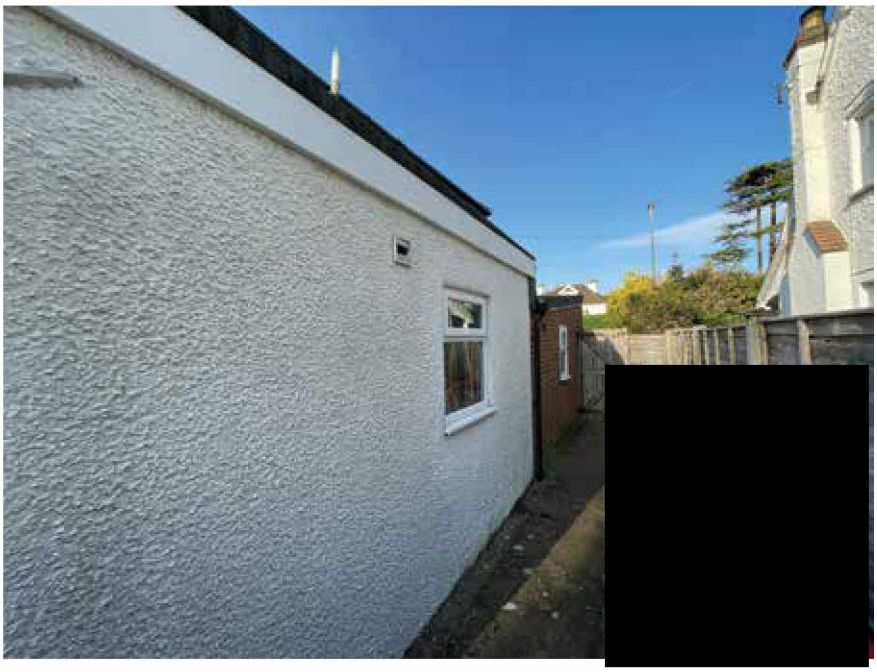
Photograph 3:

Detai; showing the eastern elevation to which the ground foor extension is attached to

Photographs 4 - 6

Photograph 4:

The eaves of both the main dwelling and extension remain very well-sealed and in good condition.



Photograph 5:

Most wall are finished in rough cast and painted render, all walls remain free of any significant cracks or holes.

Photograph 6:

Detail; showing the well-sealed eaves on the dwelling.

Photographs 7 - 9

Photograph 7:

A number of the ridge and hip tiles are no longer well cemented in place. This has led to the creation of numerous crevices that provide potential access to the inner recesses of the tiles.

Photograph 8:

The combined garage and extention has a simple fat and well-sealed roof of felt.

Photograph 9:

The dwelling has a single roof void created from a standard timber cut and pitch roof that lacks any complex joinery.
The timbers all remain in good condition. No sarking is present and the underside of the roof tiles are on show.
The roof void has a foor to ridge height of approximately 3.5 m. and the simple layout allowed for a full and thorough examination.
During the survey no evidence of bat occupation was present and overall, the roof void provides a well sealed area.

Appendix III –Information Sheets

Bat Habitat Suitably Criteria

Bat Roosting Suitability	Criteria	Survey requirement to prove likely absence
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further survey work required
Low	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roosting sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically; however, these possible roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used by large numbers of bats and are unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation roosts.	One activity survey
Medium	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habit, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two activity surveys
High	A building, structure or tree 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.	Three activity surveys

Survey requirements are taken from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2016), which is the recognised industry standard guidance used by local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.

Information sheet Artificial bird nesting boxes for Buildings: Swifts, house martins and house sparrows

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Habibat house sparrow nest box

Vivara woodstone sparrow nest box; suitable for both integral ftment or surface mounting

Ibstock Swift boxes are also suitable for house sparrows. Can be customised to suit any exterior finish.Site boxes under eaves, away from windows and direct sunlight.

Ibstock Box

Sparrow boxes should be grouped together and be at least 2 m of the ground. The boxes can be also be sited on gable walls. At least 3 per averaged size house.

Swifts boxes should be at least 5 m above the ground with an clear un-obstructed flight path.

Schwegler model 9b

Schwegler house martin box model 9 b double is a suitable box for house martins and can be used to encourage the uptakeof a building by this species. The boxes can be attached to the exterior walls in a sheltered position; ideally beneath the eaves. At least two sets should be placed on an averaged size house.