the ecology partnership

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The Bell,
The Bury, Odiham

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing. Whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date. This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated, only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Iconic Europe to undertake a preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of the old public house at The Bell, The Bury, RG29 1LY.

1.2 The key objectives of a PEA (CIEEM 2017) are to:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with a project;
- Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' (CIEEM 2016; BSI 2013, Clause 5.2);
- Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA); and
- Identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement.

1.3 This report comprises:

- The legislative and planning context (Section 1);
- Assessment methodologies (Section 2);
- Results (Section 3);
- Implications for development, including an impact assessment (Sections 4 and 5);
- Conclusions (Section 6).

Site Context

1.4 The site comprises of the Grade II listed public house The Bell and a few associated small outbuildings. The site lies just off the high street of Odiham, a semi-rural village that is located 9km east of Basingstoke (SU 74018 50997). The site covers approximately 237m^2 with the immediate surroundings comprised of retail buildings and residential housing to the west, north and east, with All Saints Parish Church and graveyard to the south. Further afar the surroundings predominantly consist of arable land, with the village of North Warnborough situated to the northwest.

1.5 The approximate red line boundary of the site is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Approximate location of the site boundary (in red) from Google Earth Pro (Taken on: 7th June 2021)

Description of Proposed Development

1.6 Current proposals for the site include the internal refurbishment and redevelopment of The Bell and the demolition of the lean-too and current toilet block.

Planning Policies

1.7 The site contains grade II listed building and lies within the Odiham Conservation Area. The proposals will be assessed against policy guidance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019) as well as relevant planning policies from the Hart District Council Local Plan 2016-2032 (2018) and the 'Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2032' (2017). These policies included the following which are considered relevant to Ecology, Biodiversity and Nature Conservation:

- **Policy I2**: Green Infrastructure;
- **Policy SD1**: Sustainable Development;
- **Policy NBE10:** Design;
- **Policy NBE3:** Landscape;
- **Policy NBE4:** Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area; and
- **Policy NBE5**: Biodiversity;

Legislation

1.8 Bats are covered by the following relevant legislation; the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended); the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006); and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010).

2.0 Methodology

Building Assessment for bats

2.1 The main house on site was internally and externally assessed for its suitability for roosting bats. The remaining outbuilding was not assessed at the time of the survey. The survey was undertaken on 20th May 2021 by Natural England bat licence holder Alexia Tamblyn MA (Oxon) MSc CEcol CEnv MCIEEM FRGS and ecologist Aimee Littlechild BSc (Hons).

2.2 The surveyor assessed the building visually and searched for evidence such as:

- Staining beneath or around a hole caused by natural oils in bat fur.
- Bat droppings beneath a hole, roost or resting area.
- Bat droppings and/or insect remains beneath a feeding area.
- Audible squeaking from within a hole.
- Insects (especially flies) around a hole.
- Dead bats.

2.3 Buildings which are considered to have a higher potential to support roosting bats would include the following:

- Agricultural buildings (e.g. farmhouses, barns and out buildings) of traditional brick or stone construction and/or with exposed beams;
- Buildings with weatherboarding and/or hanging tiles that are within 200m of woodland and/or water;
- Pre-1960s detached buildings and structures within 200m of woodland and/or water;
- Pre-1914 buildings within 400m of woodland and/or water;
- Pre-1914 buildings with gable ends or slate roofs regardless of location;
- Buildings which are located within or immediately adjacent to woodland and/or immediately adjacent to water;
- Dutch barns or livestock buildings with a single skin roof and board and gap or Yorkshire boarding if, following a preliminary roost assessment the site appears to be particularly suited to bats.

Limitations

2.4 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no single investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment.

3.0 Results

Habitat assessment

3.1 The site consists of The Bell public house, three outbuildings and a separate two storey building used as a garage and storage. Hardstanding was recorded in between these buildings and no biological habitats were recorded within the site perimeter.

Internal and external building assessment

3.2 The main public house 'The Bell' with associated outbuildings were externally and internally assessed during the survey.

3.3 The main building on site is the former public house 'The Bell', a long, narrow two-storey timber framed structure running roughly north to south. The southern gable end forms the end of a row of terraced properties that run east to west. The external walls comprised

of painted brick and exposed timber with the roof of pitched clay tile construction. Several of the tiles on the roof across all elevations were missing, broken, lifted, slipped or curved, providing potentially suitable crevices for species such as pipistrelle bats. The eaves and exposed wooden beams across the eastern elevation appeared to be well sealed.

3.4 The loft void was one space, split into two different sizes, the northern section approximately 3m wide, 4m long and 4m high. The southern section was smaller, approximately 2.5m wide, 6m long and less than 1m in height. The roof was lined with roofing felt and cobwebs present throughout. Around the chimney breast in the southern most end of the loft void, several gaps in the brickwork were recorded but these areas were very heavily cobwebbed. The exposed timbers showed no suitable potential roosting features for bats. An old birds nest was recorded within the northern end of the loft void. The entire loft void was inspected and no evidence of bats such as droppings, staining or feeding remains were recorded.

3.5 The basement was split into two parts, the larger of the two the consisting of the existing beer cellar with access internally via the bar and externally into the small courtyard. The smaller section was used as storage and both sections had well sealed ceilings. These areas would have been used frequently and this, paired with the lack of roosting features, indicates that use of the basement as a hibernation roost is negligible.

3.6 The Bell public house had no evidence of bat use internally and bat features with potential suitability for crevice dwelling bat species were limited to missing, slipped or curved clay tiles on the external roof of The Bell.

3.7 The outbuildings consisted of a toilet block, a lean to and a storage building joined to The Bell on the northwest elevation. The toilet block had a slate tiled, pitched roof but all tiles were flush and eaves were well sealed. Internally the toilet cubicles were all well sealed from the roof void with no features suitable for roosting bats. The lean to, located immediately north of the toilet block was of clear Perspex corrugated sheeting construction and offered no suitability for roosting bats. The storage building joined to The Bell had a south facing clay tile roof with both ridge and roof tiles well sealed with minimal gaps present. Internally, there was no roof lining present with no obvious PRF's

and a few gaps recorded within the brickwork that were shallow and not deep enough for crevice dwelling bats.

3.8 There was no internal or external evidence of bat activity such as droppings or staining within any of the outbuildings and they are all considered to be of 'negligible' potential for roosting bats.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 The development involves the internal refurbishment and redevelopment of the current buildings into residential flats. The works will occur on the existing building footprint and no work will be done to the external of the roof on either building. All areas of site consist of existing buildings or hard standing so no habitat will be lost during site works.

4.2 The site lies outside the 5km Special Protection Area buffer zone for Thames Basin Heaths SPA and therefore adheres to **Policy NBE4:** Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

Bats

4.3 The Bell public house did not support any evidence of bat activity, however it did support numerous external features with potential for crevice roosting bats including broken/ lifted roof tiles. The proposed development consists only of internal works with no works to be made on the external roof structure and will therefore not affect these external bat features. It is therefore considered that bats do not pose a constraint to the works on The Bell and these works can continue without any further surveys.

4.4 Three outbuildings associated with The Bell were all given 'negligible' potential to support roosting bats and as such, can be removed or altered without any further surveys.

4.5 If re-roofing works are to be conducted, however, further surveys would be recommended. Internal works within the roof void, such as re wiring and re insulating, can be conducted as this will not impact upon the structure or functionality of the roof space.

4.6 It is always recommended that enhancements for bats are included within any redevelopment works as such two bat boxes for external walls are to be established.

4.7 A total of two boxes, recommended Woodstone bat Box Vivara Pro (or similar) should be used, see figure 2. The internal compartment of these bat boxes are designed for crevice roosting bats such as the common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle and myotis species which may be present in the local area. The box is made from WoodStone - a robust material composed of concrete and wood fibres, which has excellent insulating properties and provides protection from predators. This box should be installated directly under a roof edge or gutter at least 3m in height.

Figure 2: Vivara Pro Woodstone bat box

4.8 Any proposed lighting scheme as part of the development will have to consider bats in the surrounding area, as well as on site. All bat species are nocturnal, resting in dark conditions in the day and emerging at night to feed. Bats are known to be affected by light levels which can affect both their roosting behaviour as well as their foraging behaviour. This needs to be considered, with a sympathetic lighting scheme for the development. Recommendations include:

- Installing lighting only if there is a significant need;
- Using LED luminaries due to their lower intensity, sharp cut-off and good colour rendition – any lights with UV elements or metal halide lights should not be used;

- Lights with peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone, 2012);
- Lights with an upward light ratio of 0% and good optical control;
- Careful consideration of column height to avoid light spill;
- Any external security lights should use motion-sensors and short (1-minute) timers;
- Accessories such as baffles and hoods should be used as a last resort to reduce light spill and direct light only to where needed;

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 An internal and external building assessment, and a site walkover was undertaken on 20th May 2021.

5.2 The site was found to consist only of buildings and hardstanding. Under current proposals, site works will be limited to internal refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing building into flats for residential use.

5.3 The Bell public house and associated outbuildings on site had no evidence of bat use internally. The Bell supported bat features with potential suitability for crevice dwelling bat species on the external features, albeit these were limited to missing, slipped or curved clay tiles on the external roof of The Bell.

5.4 The proposed development consists only of internal works with no works to be made on the external roof structure and will therefore not affect these external bat features. It is therefore considered that bats do not pose a constraint to the works on The Bell and associated outbuildings, and these works can continue without the need for any further survey.

5.5 In the unlikely event of a bat being found during works, all work must stop and a suitably qualified person contacted.

5.6 If more extensive works to the roof is required, then further sureys would be recommended.

6.0 References

Collins, J. (ed.)., (2016)., *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edn). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Institution of Lighting Professionals., (ILP - 2018)., *Guidance Note 08/18 – Bats and artificial lighting in the UK.* ILP, Rugby.

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

Internet resources:

Google Maps: www.google.co.uk/maps

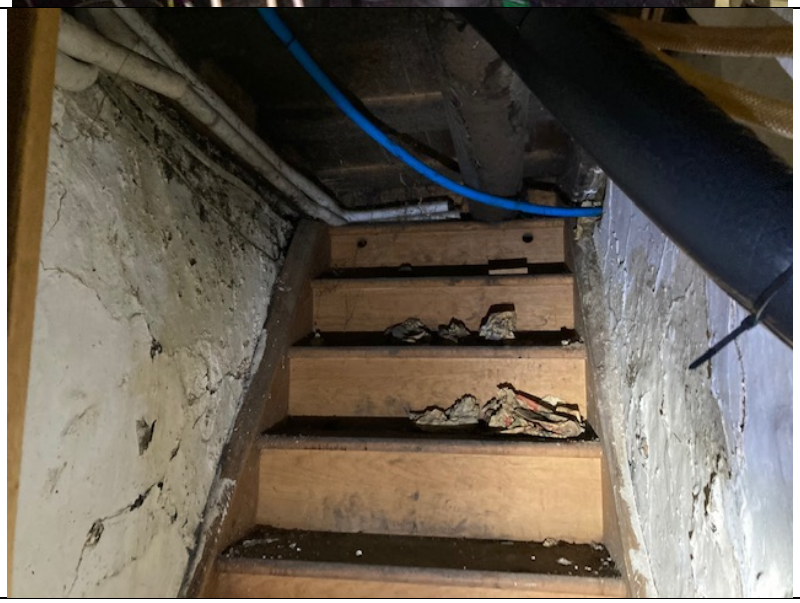
Appendix 1: Photos

Photo 1: An overview of the southern and eastern elevation of The Bell.	
Photo 2: Overview of some of the outbuildings on site, looking south. The Bell lies on the left with lean to and slate covered toilet block on the right.	

Photo 3: Another outbuilding towards the centre of site, joined onto The Bell on the north western elevation.	
Photo 4: Internal roof of the outbuilding above in Photo 3.	
Photo 5: Showing well sealed slate tile roof on the toilet block outbuilding.	

Photo 6: Well sealed internal of toilet block.	
Photo 7: Example of missing tiles on the western elevation of The Bell public house.	

Photo 8: Internal roof space of The Bell, facing north.	
Photo 9: Internal roof space of The Bell, facing south.	

Photo 10: Showing the beer cellar of The Bell.	
Photo 11: Steps leading from the public house bar to the beer cellar.	

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