Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Proposed Factory Extension, Meggit Site
Swallow Road off Holbrook Lane, Coventry

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1. INTRODUCTION

Location

1.1 The site is located along Swallow Road, off Holbrook Lane, Coventry. Central OS grid ref: **SP 32995 82292**.

Site description

1.2 The site represents approximately fifteen hundred square metres of space predominantly made up of factory buildings and exterior hard standing, and is located within a wider industrial site. The site and adjacent buildings support sparse vegetation and habitats that are likely to support wildlife can be found at the northern boundary where linear tree features are located.

Scope of Survey

1.3 It is understood that the site is to be demolished to make way for a factory extension. Martin Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to determine whether the proposals would impact upon protected species (in this case bats and birds) or habitats. A previous bat report (Ecoline, 2019) also included recommendations for demolition with regard to nesting birds. This report details the findings of this PEA and makes future recommendations based on these, but does not make comment on the conclusions and recommendations set out in the previous report undertaken by Ecoline.

Legislative context-bats

1.4 All species of bats are protected under national and European legislation 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, sell bats (or any parts of bats) unless acquired legally. Bats often tend to re-use roosts after periods of vacancy, so bat roosts are afforded protection whether or not bats are present.

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.

1.6 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.

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 (including barn owls) greater protection against disturbance whilst breeding.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 A previously undertaken bat survey (Ecoline, 2019) was reviewed and this report included a desk study for protected species. In addition to bats, the survey report also took into consideration the potential for nesting birds on site.

2.2 Building Inspection

2.2.1 Along with the findings of the above report, an inspection was made of the exterior and interior of the buildings for signs of bats such as: staining, grease marks, urine, fur, feeding remains and droppings on windowsills and walls, or potentiall roosting features (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 and binoculars were used to undertake the internal and external inspections and all accessible PRFs were inspected for bats or evidence of bats. At the same time, signs of nesting birds were searched for, and this included a search for active nests and any bird behaviour that would suggest that nesting birds may be present.

2.2.3 A photographic record was made of potential nest sites and PRFs for bats and included within this report.

2.2.4 Site vegetation was so sparse no habitat map was produced, although a plan showing habitat locations is included within this report.

2.2.5 Dean Martin conducted the survey work on 4th July 2019. Natural England bat licence number: CLS00294 (level 2).

2.2.6 Constraints
None were identified.

3. RESULTS

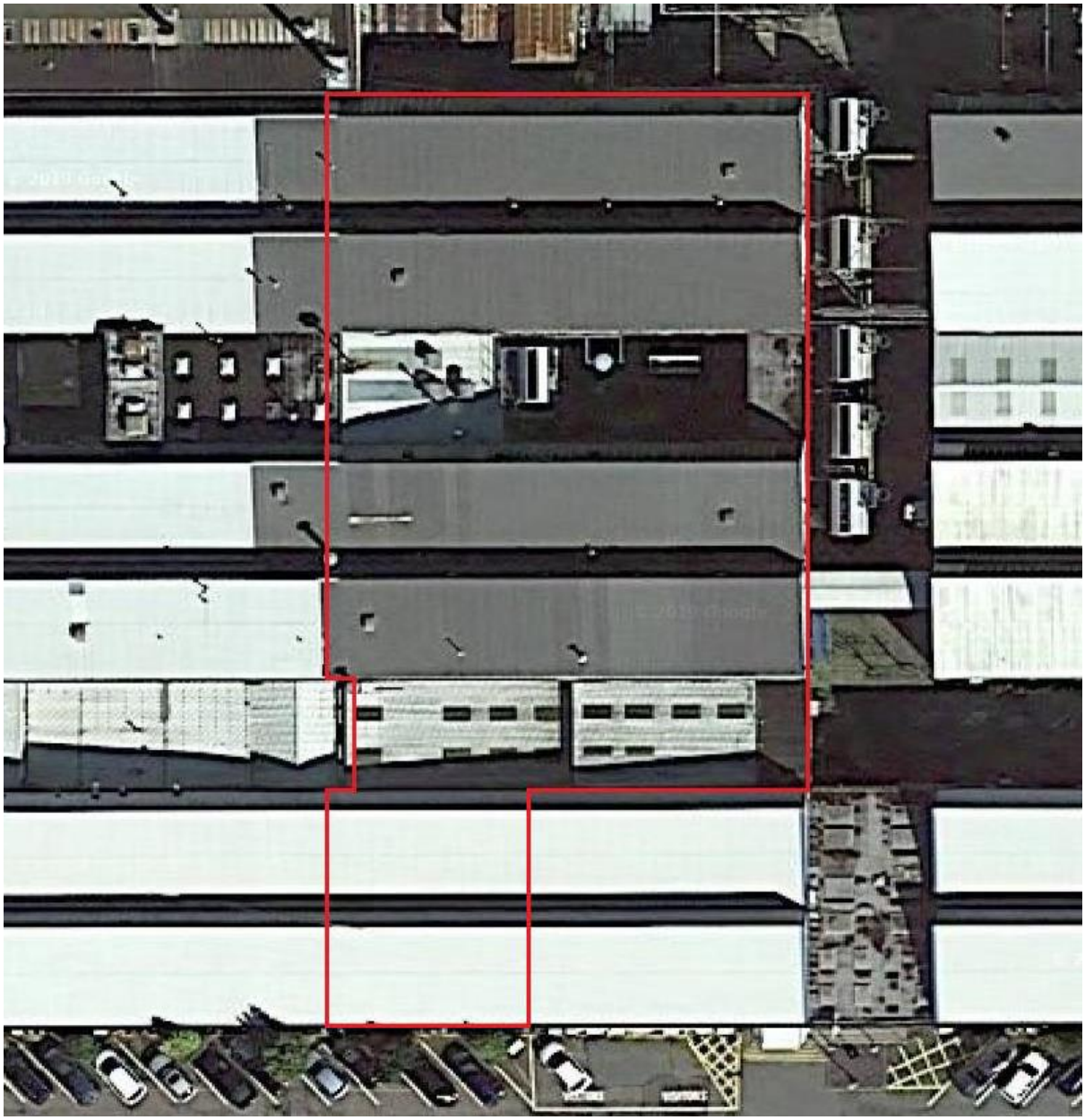
3.1 Desk study

The previously undertaken bat survey (Ecoline, 2019) identified bat records for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle from 0.8km from the site. No records for any other protected species were identified.

3.2 Building inspection

3.2.1 No evidence of bats or nesting birds was identified within the structures or at the exterior, although some opportunities for roosting bats and nesting birds were identified at the exterior of the buildings.

3.2.2 A small patch of vegetation was found at the interior courtyard, which supported mainly stinging nettle with creeping buttercup, with a few sparse grasses. The area had been cut back and offered nothing that would support any protected species.



Site plan

Small vegetation patch within courtyard

PRF / potential bird-nesting site at soffit

PRFs at east gable

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Although some roosting opportunities for bats habitats locally are poor for bats and this is consistent with the findings of the emergence and activity surveys undertaken during May and June 2019.

4.2 It is therefore considered that no further surveys will be required as the demolition is unlikely to impact bats.

4.3 Works to begin demolition should ideally start outside of the main bird-nesting season (March to August inclusive). If works to demolish cannot be timed to avoid this period, then it is recommended an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) is appointed to oversee the demolition. If active bird nests are encountered at this time then the young will be left to naturally fledge prior to destruction of the nests site or sites.

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