

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

52 Woodshires Road, Coventry, CV6 6AA



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1. INTRODUCTION

Location

1.1 The site is located at 52 Woodshires Road, CV6 6AA. and centred on OS grid ref: **SP 34675 84199**.

Site description

1.2 The site is situated on the northern edge of Coventry and represents a detached double storey dwelling with a single storey lean to extension to the north west elevation. Habitats locally include suburban housing which support mature gardens and these low-quality bat habitats connect the site directly to better quality habitats within a short distance where a mosaic of scrub, rough grassland, minor water courses, standing fresh water and patches of broadleaf woodland. These habitats can be found at the Wyken Slough which lies within 2km to the south east and at Neale's Green within 1.5km to the west.

Scope of Survey

1.3 It is understood that the house is to be extended and this will involve significant destructive works to the roof at the north east gable and at the north east elevation where a gable dormer is proposed. The proposals will also involve building on top of two single storey sections at the north west and north east elevations. In support of a planning application Martin Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the building to try to determine whether the development would impact upon protected species with specific emphasis focused on bats and nesting birds. This report details the findings of the PEA and makes future recommendations based on these.

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.

1.8 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 Building inspection

2.1.1 A daytime visit was made to the site and the interior of the building was searched for bats and evidence of bats (such as droppings, fur, feeding remains and roost exits). The entire roof section present was examined, and the inspection was made using a ladder and with the assistance of a one million candlepower torch. All accessible potential roosting features (PRFs) where bats might roost were inspected for bats, or evidence of bats.

2.1.2 An inspection was then made of the exterior of the building for signs of bats such as: staining, grease marks, urine, fur, feeding remains and droppings on windowsills and walls, or features 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 external inspection and all accessible PRFs were inspected for bats or evidence of bats.

2.1.3 Signs of nesting birds were searched for both at the exterior of the building and the interior.

2.1.4 A photographic record was made of the site and some are included within this report.

2.1.5 Dean Martin (Natural England bat licence class level 2) conducted the survey work on 12th September 2019.

2.1.6 No desk study was undertaken, although within the context of its locality the building was assessed to have potential for common and widespread void-seeking and crevice-dwelling bat species

2.1.7 If considered appropriate, and if sufficient quantities were present a sample of any droppings present would be taken for DNA analysis in order to determine the species of bat or bats that had deposited them, unless positively identified during the initial survey.

2.1.8 Constraints
None were identified.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Building inspection

3.1.1 The building was situated within a suburban on the edge of a landscape dominated by arable habitats. The structure was constructed of brick pitched roof sections clad with clay plain tiles and clay ridges. The main roof and the roofs of the lean to single storey sections were well-sealed and no PRFs or bird-nesting features could be found. Some *Buddleia* had begun to grow at the north west elevation but was not significant enough to support any bird-nesting.



North west elevation roof well-sealed



North elevation well-sealed roof



Western elevation well-sealed roof



Lean to well-sealed

3.1.2 Inside the roof voids it could be seen that the roof was not lined and a fine covering of cobweb was present at the ridge indicating no bats had disturbed this area, and an layer of aged, undisturbed dust was present on all upper surfaces including the loft floor which was covered with insulation, although no evidence of bats or birds was present.



Unlined roof



Significant dust at loft floor / no evidence of bats



Significant dust at loft floor / no evidence of bats



Significant dust at loft floor / no evidence of bats

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No evidence of bats or birds could be found either within the building or at the exterior. The site is located adjacent to moderate quality bat habitat where bats do occur, but the building does not show any suitable features that bats might use to roost. The house is

therefore currently considered to have negligible bat potential and so no further surveys will be required.

4.2 In the natural environment conditions change over time, and although the structure currently shows no roosting potential this could change. Therefore, should two years elapse without the proposed work being undertaken, roosting features may arise then a repeat survey may be required to obtain more recent data. In the unlikely event a bat is encountered during roof stripping works, work should immediately pause until Natural England have been consulted for advice on how best to proceed lawfully.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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