



ECOLOGY REPORT

The Abbey Junior School, 30 Christchurch Rd,
Reading, Berkshire RG2 7AR

Prepared for: The Abbey Junior School, 30 Christchurch Rd, Reading, Berkshire RG2 7AR

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Summary

There are no bats, evidence of bats or any other protected species, using Kensington House and the land surrounding the buildings within the development zone. There is a copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica f. purpurea*) within the immediate vicinity of the building, but this has no potential bat roosting features.

1.0. Introduction

1.1 Survey - The aim of the Phase 1 Ecology Survey was to confirm the presence/absence of any protected species and/or habitats on site and/or the presence of suitable habitats that could be used by protected species.

Local Planning Authorities are required to take into account nature conservation issues, incl. species and habitats protected under The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) and The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) when making planning decisions. Local Planning Authorities also aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity (National Policy Planning Framework 2012 (NPPF)) and to have regard to conserving biodiversity, which includes restoring and enhancing a population or habitat under the Natural Environment & Communities Act 2006 (NERC 2006)).

1.2 Report - The aim of the report is to clearly set out the results of the survey, highlighting any effects of the proposed development on any protected species and/or habitats, on or adjacent to the site and provides mitigation and/or enhancement as appropriate.

1.3 Location of site - The site is The Abbey Junior School, 30 Christchurch Rd, Reading, Berkshire RG2 7AR (Fig. 1), grid reference SU 72334 72148.

Figure 1. Location Plan of Site



1.4 Description of Site - The Junior School is composed of a number of buildings, but only one will be affected by the proposed development, which is Kensington House. Kensington House was built between 1875 - 1877. It is brick with wooden windows and doors. There are no soffits or fascias. The building was re-roofed in 2014 - 2015 with a slate-type tile. There is a flat-roofed building on the W side of Kensington House with aluminium doors and windows (Figs. 2 - 6).

The area around the buildings is tarmac for parking, with wooden boundary fences and trees, incl. copper beech (Fig. 4).

Figure 2. N elevation of buildings



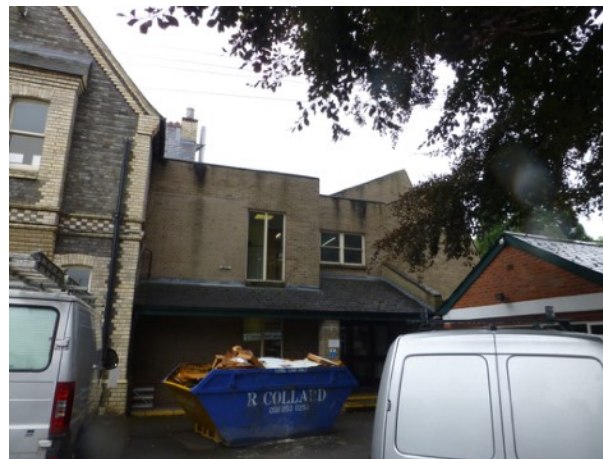
Figure 3. NE elevations of buildings



Figure 4. Flat-roofed building with copper beech



Figure 5. Close up of flat-roofed building



1.5 Description of Proposals - The proposed works are to extend the front of the school, Kensington House. The type and scope of the survey is appropriate to the nature and extent of development and scale of impact.

Figure 6. Rear of building (S)



2.0. Method

2.1. Desk Study - The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was used to search for data on protected habitats. A species records search from Hampshire Biological Information Centre (HBIC) was not commissioned, as there were no protected species or habitats either on, or adjacent to the site to warrant this.

2.2. Field Survey - The ecology survey (extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey) was carried out on 26th July 2017, assessing the site for species and/or habitats protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended). Species and habitats of principal importance and general biodiversity interest of the site (Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006) were also considered. Surveys were carried out following all relevant guidelines (please see Reference section). The weather was still, sunny and 14C.

2.2.1. Bats & Buildings - All the external walls, roof coverings, soffits, fascias, internal spaces, beams, ledges, windowsills, floors, holes and cavities, etc., were checked for evidence of use by bats. Regular use is indicated by staining, droppings and worn surfaces.

2.2.2. Bats & Trees - The trees on site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats based on suitable bat roosting features present, such as cracks, splits, woodpecker holes, deadwood, presence of scratch marks and ivy. An assessment was also made of the suitability of the site and the surrounding landscape to support foraging and/or commuting bat species. The trees were assessed as having high, medium, low or negligible bat potential.

2.2.3. Other protected species - The survey assessed the site for signs of use by protected species, eg, for badgers – badger holes, latrines, hair on wire fencing, snuffle holes, etc., for reptiles/amphibians – suitable habitat, presence in/under various materials, eg, in wood piles, etc., birds – suitable habitat, nests, nesting material, etc.

2.3. Field Equipment - Equipment used to carry out the survey incl. torch, ladder, endoscope, binoculars, compass, notebook and pen.

2.4. Details of Surveyor - Katie Pollard BSc, MSc, PhD, MCIEEM. Director and Principal Ecologist at KP Ecology. Ecologist for over 20 years. Natural England Licences held; Bat Class Licence 2015-11253-CLS-CLS, Barn Owl Class Licence CL29/00032, Water Vole Class Licence CL31/00052 and White-Clawed Crayfish Class Licence 2016-20694-CLS-CLS.

3.0. Constraints to Survey

None.

4.0. Results

4.1 Building - There are two roof voids in Kensington House. Both have breathable membrane, which was added when re-roofing work was undertaken in 2014 - 2015. The W rood void is lined with wooden sarking boards, with breathable membrane in between the tiles and the boarding. The E loft space has breathable membrane lining the tiles. No bats or evidence of bats was found in either of the loft spaces.

The tiles on the outside of the building are very tight and the concrete is all intact. There are no gaps. No bat droppings, or staining was observed on the outside of the building.

Figure 6. West roof void of building



Figure 7. West roof void with struts



Figure 8. Breathable membrane in E roof void

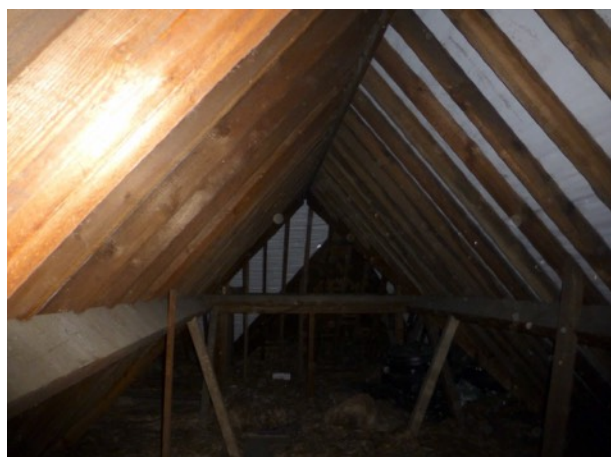


Figure 9. Ridge of area of E roof void



4.2. Nesting Birds - Although no nesting birds were observed during the survey, the vegetation around the boundary of the site (Laurel bushes) provides some habitat for nesting birds.

4.3. Other protected species - No other protected species, or habitats for protected species were observed on site.

4.4. Trees - The trees do not have any potential roost features for bats and therefore have LOW bat potential.

4.5. Protection of habitats on site for protected species - No other suitable habitats for protected or notable species were observed during the survey, with the exception of a few Laurel bushes, which provide cover for nesting birds.

4.6. Further surveys - No further surveys are required.

4.7. Data searches - There are no protected sites within 2km of The Abbey Junior School.

5.0. Conclusion

No bats or evidence of bats were found using Kensington House.

No other protected species were found on site. However, the Laurel bushes on site do provide suitable habitat for nesting birds (although none were observed during the survey). Should this vegetation need to be removed, replacement hedging will be required. In addition no vegetation will be removed during bird nesting season, as all birds and their nests are protected under The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

6.0. Recommendations

Replacement planting will be required should any vegetation that provides suitable habitat for nesting birds be removed. Species and location will be discussed with the ecologist.

7.0. References

Bats & Trees. Bat Conservation Trust www.bats.org.uk/data/files/publications/Bats_Trees.pdf

BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development (2013).

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Ecologist Signature



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