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Bat Presence/Likely-absence Survey

Report Prepared on behalf of Hannah Goddard and Sam Gray

For the site of '222 Thirlmere Ave RG30 6XJ'

Date: 29/05/2015

15 1328

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Bat Presence/Likely-absence Survey

Background to Survey

The client, Hannah Goddard and Sam Gray has commissioned Arbtech Consulting Ltd. to undertake a full bat presence/likely-absence¹ survey for a house at '222 Thirlmere Ave RG30 6XJ'. The proposed plans involve an extension to the side of the dwelling and a loft conversion. These will be two storeys and includes the replacement of the roof.

The Survey builds upon a Preliminary Roost Assessment undertaken by Arbtech Consulting Ltd on 04/12/2014.

Summary of Recommendations

A full presence/likely-absence survey has been conducted in accordance with industry standard guidelines (Hundt 2012).

It is assessed that there is a likely-absence of bats/bat roosts within the structure[s]. No further evaluation is considered necessary. A planning decision can be made on the basis that there is no risk to bats or bat roosts.

¹ It is not currently scientifically possible to prove an absence so an assessed absence is usually referred to as a "likely-absence".

Summary of Potential Mitigation, Potential Impact, Loss and Gain

Bat Species	Potential impact/loss?	Potential mitigation required*	Potential ecological gain?
Bats	No bat roost located in the development area of the site.	N/A	Under NPPF and 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para.99 additional bat boxes should be installed within the grounds of the site. These should be of the Schwegler type e.g. 1FF and hung on trees in the grounds.

1.0 The Company and Contact Information

Established in 2005, Arbtech Consulting Limited provides arboricultural and ecological consultancy services in respect to planning and development, throughout the UK.

Tel 01244 660558

@ email@arbtech.co.uk

Web www.arbtech.co.uk

2.0 The Lead Surveyor

The lead surveyor and principal author of this report is Mr Martin O'Connor Dip, BSc (Hons), MSB, ACIEEM.

2.1 Other Surveyors

Tanya O'Connor - A former member of the Bedfordshire Bat group committee and holder of a level two bat licence, Tanya has over six years of bat surveying experience including bat care and general survey knowledge.

3.0 Bat Licences

The lead surveyor holds a relevant Scientific Bat Licence with Natural England at levels 3 and 4.

4.0 The Client

The client is Ms Hannah Goddard and Mr Sam Gray.

5.0 The Site of Proposed Development

The client is preparing a planning application to extend to the side and convert the loft of the dwelling at '222 Thirlmere Ave RG30 6XJ'.

6.0 The Survey Brief

The client has commissioned Arbtech Consulting Ltd to undertake a full bat presence/likely-absence survey; in accordance with best practice as set out in BCT Bat Survey Guidelines.

7.0 Controls

This survey can only ever provide a limited 'snap-shot' of the potential habitat and wildlife value of the structure(s) at the times of the surveys only and may require further evaluation to provide robust, scientifically valid evidence of species likely-absence.

Physical access internally and externally is often limited by physical barriers and/or health and safety constraints.

8.0 Data Searches

A data search has been commissioned in order to retrieve existing bat records in the area to provide scientific context.

The data search is confidential information that is not suitable for public release.

The data is provided for officer verification purposes and any appendix containing the results should be removed before placing this report on any form of public register or display.

9.0 Date(s) of the Survey

28/05/2015.

10.0 Seasonality

This type of assessment can be conducted during the period May to September inclusive, with the optimal season for surveying maternity colonies limited to mid-May to August inclusive (Hundt, 2012). Exceptionally, owing to favourable weather conditions it may be possible to extend the survey window but this will need the prior agreement of the regulatory bodies.

11.0 Informative

Table 1: Summary of Pertinent Legislation and Planning Policy Relevant to the Protection of Bats in the UK

This table is adapted from Table 2.1 and Section 2.5 of the Bat Surveys—Good Practice Guidelines.

Location of Roost	Transposing EC Habitats Directive	Other Relevant Legislation	Planning Policy
England	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. Countrywide and Rights of Way Act 2000. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.	National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF").
Wales	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. Countrywide and Rights of Way Act 2000. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.	Technical Advice Note ("TAN") 5.
Scotland	Conservation (Natural Habitat & c.) Regulations 1994 as amended.	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. The Nature conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.	National Planning Policy Guidance ("NPPG") 14 and Planning Advice Note ("PAN") 60.

Cumulatively, this legislation makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats, or any part of a bat.

A bat roost is defined by Hundt as "the resting place of a bat". Generally however, the word roost is interpreted to mean "any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection."

12.0 The Survey Methodology

In order to fully assess the potential value of bat habitat at the site, the survey is based upon widely accepted, industry best-practice standards set out in the BCT Bat Survey Guidelines.

The survey involves for the observation of all elevations the structure(s) by suitably experienced bat surveyors. The surveyors utilise broadband bat detectors to assist with the bat recording.

Inspections are both internal (where possible) and external, and make use of

- Torches.
- Broadband Bat Detectors (Echo Meter Touch and EM3).
- Night vision equipment (Sony IR Camcorder and Spec Bullet IR lights).
- Thermometers/hygrometers/anemometers.
- Ladders.
- Endoscopes where applicable.
- Mirrors.
- Binoculars.
- Cameras where appropriate to do so.
- Sample bags where appropriate.

The aims of the survey are:

- To determine presence/likely-absence of species i.e. the species present in a given area.
- To determine the intensity of bat activity both spatially and temporally i.e. to help estimate bat populations.
- To determine the type of activity, most usually foraging (e.g. by feeding buzzes), commuting (e.g. by high directional pass rates) and mating (e.g. by mating social calls).
- To find roosts by tracking back bat flight paths or observing dawn flight activity at roosts.

- To find or record the emergence of bats from a building or built structure.

If bats, evidence of their recent activity or the emergence of bats from a roost are found during our survey, this report will make recommendations for further survey work and/or design mitigation, where this is consistent with national guidelines, and assessed appropriate by the surveyor in the context of the proposal.

13.0 Previous Survey Findings (*If PRA'd previously*)

The site was the subject of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) conducted by Arbtech Consulting Ltd, on

Table 2: PRA Summary

Roost	Habitat Value	Are bat emergence surveys required?
Building B1	Low. There are several less significant roosting features found externally on the building, these included minor gaps at the soffit, missing mortar and raised lead flashing. The location of the site with it being adjacent to parkland and woodland makes it more likely that bats will use the building as a roost. Without doing further surveys absence or presence cannot be confirmed.	Yes. 1x Dusk survey. May to September inclusive. 2 x surveyors.

14.0 Dates of the Bat Emergence Survey

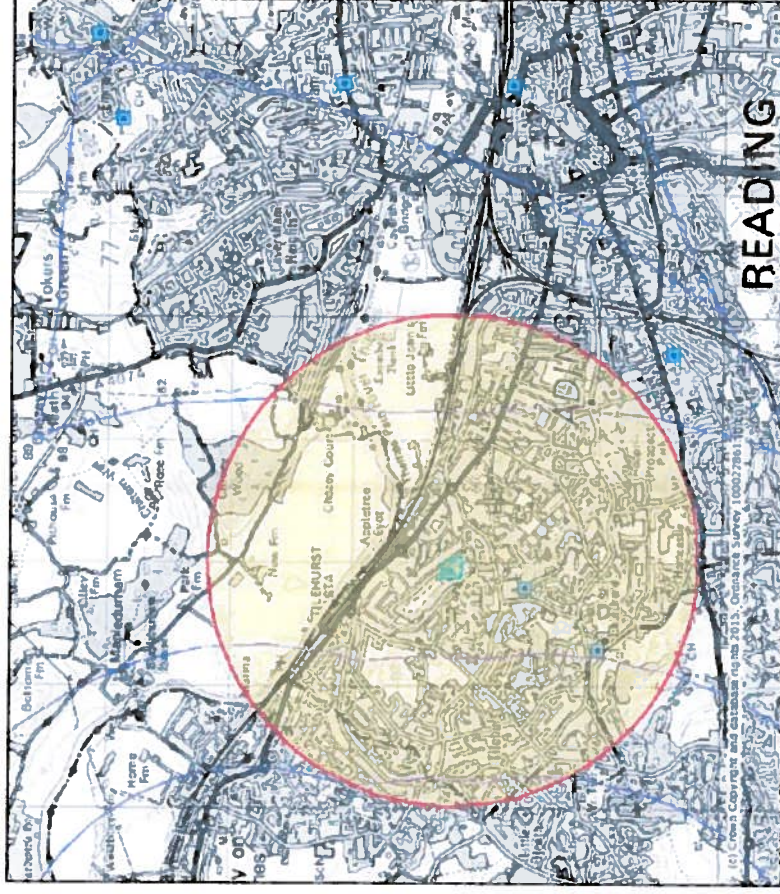
Table 3: Survey Dates, Times and Weather Records

Date	Survey	Time: from/to	Weather: Start	Weather: Finish
28/05/2015	Dusk	8:45 pm - 10:45 pm	Temp: 17 °C Humidity: 58% Cloudy: 10% Wind: 0/8 Rain: None	Temp: 13 °C Humidity: 55% Cloudy: 0% Wind: 1/8 Rain: None

15.0 Extents of the Desk Study

Table 4: Buildings and or trees referred to by number and in accordance with the sketch plan at Appendix 1.

Desk Study Records	The survey preparation has been informed by the use of a desk study utilising: - aerial images from Google Earth, MAGIC and other freely available information e.g. Natural England's nature on the map website, and OS Opendata 2010 using grid reference SU60742 and postcode RG30 6XJ. MAGIC search:
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The site is in a nitrate vulnerable zone. It backs on to Round Copse LNR and is less than 500m away from Lousehill Copse LNR and McIlroy Park LNR. The adjacent LNR has Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat and Ancient Woodland present.

	TVERC records show no bat roosts within 500m.		
Local Environment	Site Location: The site is in a residential area in Tilehurst and is immediately surrounded by closely spaced housing to the north, south and east.		
	Landscape Features suitable for bat use	Present within 1km + notes (distances)	
	Woodland	McIlroy Park lies adjacent to the site at the end of the back garden which has woodland lined grassland. The tree line at the end of the garden leads directly to the more extensive areas of woodland. This woodland extends to the south into Compart's Plantation and Lousehill Copse.	
	Linear Features e.g. tree lines, hedges, gardens	Tree lines along back gardens and tree and woodland lined parks provide commuting features from the site to wider habitat. The River Thames also provides an excellent foraging and commuting feature which lies approx. 530m north east at its closest point.	

	Parkland	McIlroy Park lies adjacent to the site and The Arthur Newbery Park lies approx. 870m north west.	
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16.0 Survey Results

Table 5: Buildings and or trees referred to by number and in accordance with the sketch plan at Appendix 1 and photographs at Appendix 2.

Surveyors: A: Martin O'Connor B: Tanya O'Connor				
Survey or Initials	Suspected Roost Identified on sketch plan at Appendix 1	Dates and Times	Records of Significant Bat Activity	Roost Status: Emergence (Black) Activity (Amber) No Activity (Green)
		28/05/2015 Sunset 21.06		
A	B1	20.45 - 22.45	Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>) heard from 21.35 at distance until 22.00. One bat was seen during this period flying through the rear gardens. Soprano pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>) heard at 21.56.	Activity
B	B1	20.45 - 22.45	Common pipistrelle heard and seen at 21.45 flying around the house. A further Common Pipistrelle was heard at 21.51. A single soprano pipistrelle was heard at 21.55.	Activity

Bat activity maps and surveyor locations are found at Appendix I.

17.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Table 6: Buildings, Groups or Trees referred to by number and in accordance with the sketch plan at Appendix I.

Suspected roost Identified on sketch plan at Appendix 1	Was the roost confirmed?	Will the development affect the roost?	Roost significance Graded per Natural England Guidance	What recommendations and mitigation are appropriate?	Is a European Protected Species Licence necessary?
B1	Unconfirmed ☒ Further survey work required ☐ Confirmed ☐ No roost confirmed, there is a likely absence of bats.	No. A roost was not confirmed to be present in the building.	Low ☐ Moderate ☐ High ☐ N/A	Mitchel-Jones (2004) defines the conservation value of bat habitats and roosts and makes proposals for mitigation that are appropriate to: the species of bat(s); the population using the roost; and the roost's status e.g. maternity, pre-breeding summer roost, <i>hibernacula</i> , etc. We recommend: As no roost has been confirmed in the building the works can proceed without delay. The LPA has a duty to ask for enhancement under the NPPF and circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para.99, therefore bat boxes should be installed in the grounds of the site to provide an enhancement. These should be of the Schwegler	Yes ☐ No ☒

				type e.g. 1FF and a minimum of one box can be installed on retained trees within the grounds. The box should be no less than three metres off ground level and face south/southwesterly. No artificial light should shine on the boxes and clear flight paths to and from the boxes should be considered. If at any time bats are found during works, works should stop and further advice sought from a licensed bat worker.	
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18.0 Bibliography

Hundt L (2012) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, Bat Conservation Trust ISBN-13: 9781872745985

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

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005). Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para.99

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/147570.pdf>

19.0 Document Production and Approval

Status	Issue	Author/Reviewer	Date
Draft	0	MOC	29/05/2015
2nd Draft	0	CW	29/05/2015
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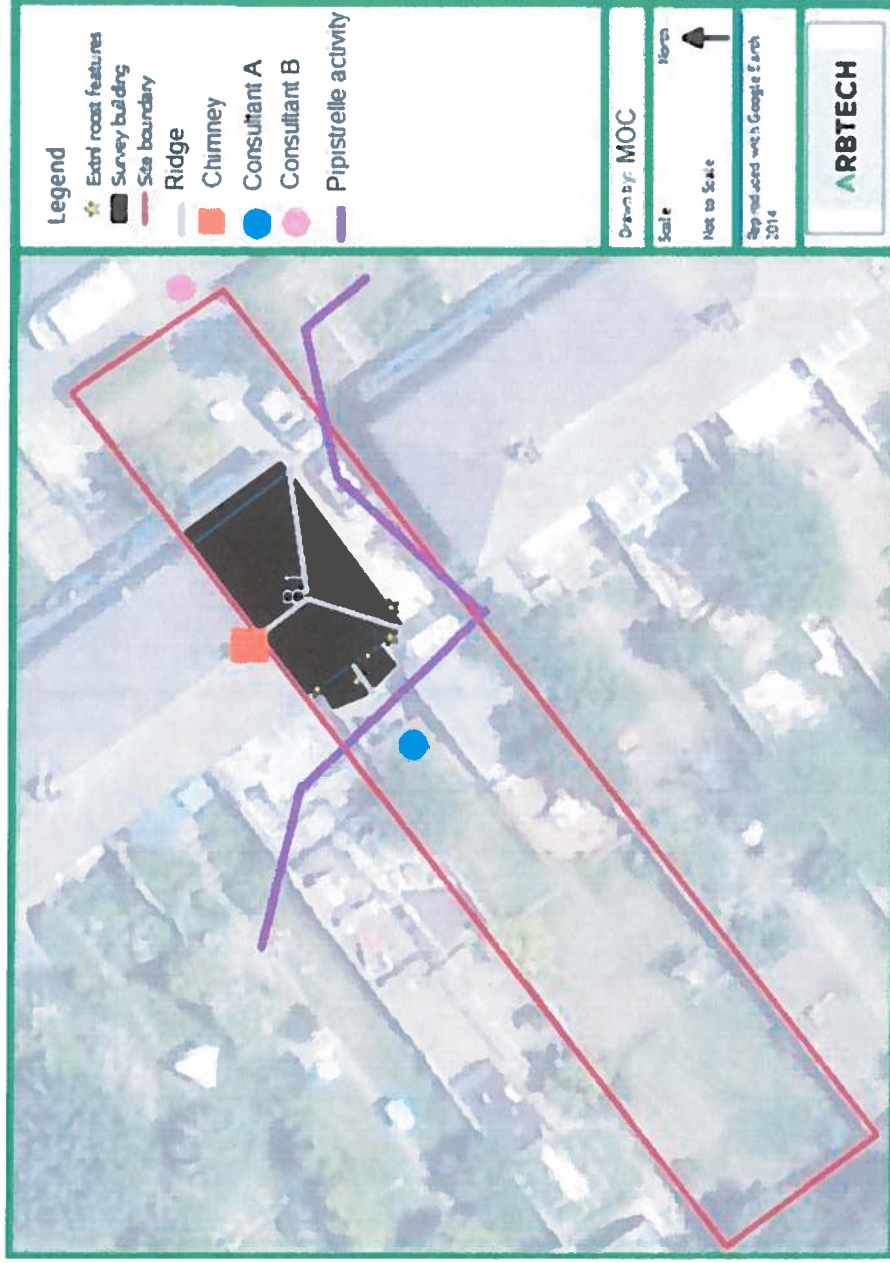
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Appendix 1 Plan



Appendix 2 Photos



Figure 1: Front elevation.



Figure 2: side elevation, proposed extension area.



Figure 3: Rear elevation