

4 September 2024

Our ref: 243278/ARB

Mr K Chakravarty
14 Woodrow Drive
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1RS

Dear Mr Chakravarty

14 WOODROW DRIVE, WOKINGHAM

Introduction

In accordance with your instructions, AA Environmental Limited (AAe) carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the above property on Thursday 29 August 2024. The purpose of the survey was to assess the presence or likely absence of bats utilising the building and provide appropriate mitigation measures, as necessary. A series of photographs has been attached for reference.

The proposals are to construct a rear extension, requiring the demolition of the existing extensions. As the works are largely limited to the existing built footprint, the vast majority of the garden area will remain unaffected by the works.

Legislation

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe)* the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Methodology

Baseline Data

As certain baseline data is now readily available on the internet, the Multi-agency website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) was consulted to determine whether any part of the site or nearby habitats have been statutorily or otherwise designated and whether any European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats have been granted within 1 km of the site. In addition, a review of Google Earth's satellite imagery (http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/index.html) was completed to determine past land uses of the site and surrounding land.

Walk-over Site Survey

A visual survey of the site was completed to record any evidence of bats or features that could provide potential roosting opportunities following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust¹ and by an experienced and licensed ecologist². A thorough internal and external examination of the existing building was carried out,

¹ Collins, J. (ed) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² The lead surveyor was Alan Beaumont, BSc (Hons), MSc. MCIEEM.

with any access points inspected for evidence of bats. All internal roof voids/spaces, where present, were accessed to check for any evidence of bats.

The surrounding habitat was also surveyed to identify any important features such as mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats and any established lines of vegetation that might provide important flightlines.

Evidence of bats is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:

- the presence of bat droppings, which tend to accumulate under established roost sites or at roost entrances;
- the accumulation of large numbers of moth wings, which have been discarded by feeding bats;
- areas of staining by urine or from fur rubbing; and
- the presence of bats themselves or their corpses.

The visual survey was facilitated by the use of binoculars, ladders, powerful torches (1M candlepower) and a Ridgid Micro CA-350 Inspection Camera endoscope. A heterodyne bat detector (Pettersson D200) was also used to record any bat calls during the inspection.

In accordance with good practice, the site was checked for any evidence of other protected species or species of particular note.

Results

Baseline Data

According to the Multi-agency website, there are no statutory designated ecological sites located within the 2 km study area. The nearest site is Holt Copse and Joel Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located approximately 2.1 km to the west of the site. There are no Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) located on or adjacent to the site, with the nearest being an area of Deciduous Woodland, also noted in the National Forestry Inventory, located 0.4 km to the north.

According to the Multi-agency website, there are no bat licenses granted within the 1 km study area. The nearest licence was located 1.1 km to the south west of the site, for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) bats (reference: EPSM2018-34805).

Google Earth Imagery shows that the site has remained largely unchanged since at least 2003, comprising of the existing property and associated hardstanding and garden area.

Site Description (Photographs 1-4)

The site is located off Woodrow Drive in a residential area of Wokingham, centred at National Grid Reference: SU 8267468709 and covers approximately 0.1 of a hectare. The site comprised the existing residential dwelling with associated hardstanding, garage and garden area. The site is bordered by Woodrow Drive to the north, and residential properties and associated gardens to all other sides.

The property was a masonry constructed bungalow, with a pitched tiled roof. Plastic soffits/fascias were present, which were well-sealed. There was a timber lean-to structure at the side of the property with a plastic corrugated roof. Two extensions were present at the rear of the bungalow, one was a conservatory style extension with glass side panels and glass pitched roof and the other was an extension to the kitchen, which was masonry and had a pitched tiled roof with a restricted roof void above. The main roof space of the bungalow appeared to have been re-roofed fairly recently with new trusses and lined with a modern breathable membrane. The restricted roof space above the rear extension was lined with a bitumen based membrane, with some foil backed insulation also present.

Lawns and driveway/hardstanding dominated the garden area, with an individual apple tree (*Malus sp.*) present. There was a double garage with a flat roof present at the rear of the site. There was a remnant ornamental pond within the patio area at the rear of the property.

Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded during a careful internal and external inspection of the property. The tiles were heavy concrete ones and well aligned and tightly sealed, with no obvious access points recorded. The plastic soffits and fascias were sealed with mastic with no obvious gaps recorded. The roof spaces were fully accessed, with the main attic lined with a modern membrane and insulated with mineral wool and well-sealed (considered to have been relatively recently re-roofed). The restricted roof void above the rear extension was found to be dusty and heavily cobwebbed.

The site, being a well-maintained residential plot of limited size, provided very limited foraging opportunities for bats. There was only a single tree recorded on the site which will be retained.

Other Wildlife

Apart from a few common species of bird, either recorded on the site or flying overhead, no other species of any note were recorded.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposals are to construct a rear extension, requiring the demolition of the existing extensions. As the works are largely limited to the existing built footprint, the vast majority of the garden area will remain unaffected by the works.

There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly affected by the proposals. The site is of overall low ecological value with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of bats or other protected species recorded.

Although there are considered to be no ecological constraints to the proposals, a series of specific and generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, should be implemented to reduce any impact the development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023³.

A thorough examination of the existing building was completed, with all potential access points and/or roosting opportunities fully inspected for evidence of bats. The roof spaces were fully accessed and not complex allowing a thorough inspection and, therefore, there are considered to be no constraints to the survey findings. Although no evidence of bats was recorded and no further surveys are considered necessary, all site operatives should be made aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts. In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered on the site, then works should stop immediately and Natural England or AAe contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided.

It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Although no current or old bird nesting material was recorded during the survey with very limited areas of potential nesting habitat to the removed/affected, a check should be carried out prior to any works to ensure there are no active nests present.

³ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

Although the works are restricted with limited opportunities to implement any enhancement measures, a few wildlife boxes (such as bat and bird boxes) could be installed onto the site to provide enhanced roosting and nesting opportunities.

The effects of lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess, but it is thought that lighting can adversely affect invertebrates, birds and bats. No new lighting is proposed so there will be no change in current level of lighting.

The recommendations provided above try to pre-empt any issues that may arise as well as provide some mitigation and enhancement measures. I trust this is of interest to you and provides the Local Planning Authority with enough information to determine the application but let me know if further clarification is required.

Yours sincerely



Alan Beaumont
BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM
Class Licence CL18

Encl. Photograph Record Sheet (Drg. No. 243278/01)



Photograph 1: Showing the rear extensions.



Photograph 2: Showing the internals of the rear extensions.



Photograph 3: Showing the restricted roof void above the rear extension.



Photograph 4: Showing the main roof space/attic of the bungalow.

Rev.	Details	Drawn Chkd.	Date
PROJECT 14 Woodrow Drive Wokingham			
TITLE Photograph Record Sheet			
 AAe Environmental Consultants AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T: 01235 536042 F: 01235 523849 info@aae-ltd.co.uk www.aae-ltd.co.uk			
Scale	Date 04.09.24	Drg No.	Rev.
NTS	Drawn EC	Chkd. ARB	243278/01