

11 February 2019

Our ref: 193037/ARB

Mr R Farris
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Haines Watts
4 Claridge Court
Lower Kings Road
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HP4 2AF

Dear Mr Farris

2 GLENVIEW ROAD, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

Introduction

In accordance with your instructions, AA Environmental Limited (AAe) carried out an ecological survey of the above site on Thursday 17 January 2019. The purpose of the survey was to determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas and to record any evidence of protected species, in particular bats. This information will serve to assess the ecological impact of the proposals and identify any ecological constraints and/or mitigation measures that may be required. A series of photographs has been attached for reference.

The proposals are to extend the existing property and construct a new dwelling in the rear and side amenity space, resulting in the removal of the existing detached garage and clearance of some of the vegetation.

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. 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. The survey was carried out following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust¹. A thorough internal and external examination of the existing buildings was carried out, with any potential access

¹ Collins, J. (ed) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

points inspected for evidence of bats. All internal roof voids/spaces were accessed to check for any evidence of bats.

In addition, a careful inspection of each tree on the site was carried out to identify those features that are important for roosting bats. Surveying trees presents particular problems at any time of the year as bats will use a wide variety of roost sites in cavities, splits, cracks, knotholes and under loose bark, many of which are not easily detected from the ground.

Each tree was assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- **Negligible** – negligible habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats.
- **Low** – a tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roosting features (PRFs) but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
- **Moderate** – a tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
- **High** – a tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

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 Visual Optics VO36-10ww endoscope.

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 ecological statutory designated sites located on or directly adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory designated site is Shrubhill Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located 1 km to the west of the site. Other statutory sites within the 2 km search area are summarised in Table 1.

According to the Multi-agency website, there are several Habitats of Principal Importance within 2 km of the site, the closest being Deciduous Woodland, located 0.2 km to the east of the site. Other sites within 2 km included Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, located 1.1 km to the south, Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, located 1.2 km to the north and Lowland Calcareous Grassland, located 1.6 km to the south.

Google Earth Imagery shows that the site has remained largely unchanged since at least 1999, being dominated by the existing property with associated driveway and well-maintained garden.

Table 1: Desk-top study results

Statutory Designated Sites		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance/direction from site
Shrubhill Common	LNR	1 km to the W
Howe Grove Wood	LNR	1.5 km to the NE
Roughdown Common	SSSI	1.5 km to the S

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest
LNR – Local Nature Reserve

Site Description (Photographs 1-4)

The site is located off Glenview Road in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, centred at National Grid Reference: TL 048072 and covers approximately 0.1 of a hectare. The site comprises the existing property and detached garage, set within areas of hardstanding and a well-maintained garden. It is bordered by Lockers Park Lane to the east, Glenview Road to the south and residential properties and associated gardens to all other sides.

The property was a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling of masonry construction, which was rendered with pebbledash and painted white. The property had a hipped and pitched roof consisting of machine-made clay tiles with well-sealed plastic soffits and fascias. There was a two-storey and single-storey extension to the rear. The two-storey extension was of a similar construction type as the main property with a flat lead roof. The single-storey extension was masonry and glass construction, finished with a plastic, faux-timber cladding and areas of painted pebble dashing. Internally there was a single attic space, that had been converted to provide additional storage space and well lit by a Velux window. Although the roof was unlined, thin chipboard had been pinned to the rafters.

The detached double garage was located at the rear of the plot and accessed via a track off Lockers Park Road. The garage was of masonry construction with a shallow single pitched felted roof. The painted, timber barge boards on the garage were closely fitted, with only narrow gaps visible. There was a timber garden shed within the garden with a pitched felt covered roof and no separate roof space.

Lawns dominated the garden, with some areas of ornamental planting and an individual tree also present. Species recorded in the lawn were typical of amenity grassland and included perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.). Ornamental species recorded included pendulous sedge (*Carex pendula*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), box (*Buxus* sp.) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), with a semi-mature apple (*Malus* sp.) tree recorded in the centre of the lawn. There was a small tub dug into the lawn to act as a bird bath, which measured approximately 30 cm x 50 cm.

Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded during a careful internal and external inspection of any of the buildings on site. The property was well maintained, with no visible gaps in the tiling or soffits/fascias. The converted attic space was well-lit by the Velux window and was unlined, with the undersides of the roof tiles visible behind the chipboard cladding. The garage was also well maintained and sealed, lacking any obvious access points or crevice dwelling features that bat could utilise for roosting, with any narrow gaps behind barge boards filled with general debris and cobwebs. The timber garden shed did not provide any roosting opportunities for bats.

The semi-mature apple tree recorded on site, did have a rot hole but this was easily inspected from the ground with no evidence of bats recorded.

The site, comprising a single plot within a largely built up area, provides limited foraging opportunities for common species of bats.

Other Wildlife

There was a single mammal run under the close board fence on the eastern boundary with only a few fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) hairs recorded. However, the current owner stated that badgers (*Meles meles*) do come into the garden. The site is located opposite Lockers Park School, where large areas of open green space provide good foraging habitat for badgers and other wildlife. Apart from a few common species of birds, either recorded on the site or flying overhead, no other species of any note were recorded.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposals are to extend the existing property and construct a new dwelling in the rear and side amenity space, resulting in the removal of the existing detached garage and clearance of some of the vegetation.

There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly or indirectly 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 some limited badger activity being the only evidence of protected species recorded.

As badgers are active in the area, a number of controls will be implemented, in order to minimise any disturbance to badgers during and after the works, as detailed below:

- any temporary and permanent fencing to be installed on the site will be raised slightly off the ground (200 mm) or gaps provided, to allow badgers unrestricted access throughout the site;
- any deep excavations that are to be left open overnight will include a means of escape for any animals that may fall in, using planks of wood to act as ramps;
- where possible, works will be limited to the hours from dawn to one hour before sunset;
- where possible, the creation of large stock piles of earth will be avoided as these may prove attractive for badgers to excavate new setts;
- no pipework should remain open with any exposed ends capped-off at the end of the working day to prevent any animals entering pipework. **N.B. Badgers can enter pipework as small as 250 mm in diameter and therefore all pipework should be capped-off in accordance with good practice;** and
- as badgers can excavate new setts, any fresh excavations recorded on the site should be immediately reported and fully investigated.

In addition to the more specific measures detailed above, a series of generic measures, as detailed below, could be implemented on the site 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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018².

Although no evidence of bats was recorded, all site operatives should be made aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts. In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered, 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)*. Therefore, site clearance works should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, which, in general, runs from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a check should be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active nests present.

In order to protect any vegetation to be retained, suitable fencing may be required at certain locations to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused during the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches should be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should conform to current industry best practice, i.e. BS 3998: 2010 'Tree Work - Recommendations'.

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

As part of the proposals, soft landscaping will be carried out. Where any new planting is proposed it should aim to use native species, but where this is not practicable then species of known value for wildlife can be used. In particular, flowering plants will be of benefit to invertebrate species and shrubs and trees may provide nesting opportunities for birds once they become established.

A series of bird/bat boxes could be installed on site to provide enhanced nesting/roosting opportunities. Any boxes installed should be positioned in accordance with good practice.

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. Although the site currently experiences light spillage from on-site sources and neighbouring properties and roads, in accordance with good practice, any new lighting to be introduced should be designed to minimise light spillage and pollution and not directed onto any bird/bat boxes installed.

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) MCIEEM
Class Licences CL08 and CL18

Encl. Photograph Record Sheet (Drg. No. 193037/01)



Photograph 1: Showing the front of the property.



Photograph 2: Showing the rear of the property and patio area.



Photograph 3: Showing the unlined attic space, exposing the undersides of the roof tiles.



Photograph 4: Showing the garage.

Rev.	Details	Drawn Chkd.	Date
PROJECT 2 Glenview Road Hemel Hempstead			
TITLE Photograph Record Sheet			
		AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T: 01235 536042 F: 01235 523849 info@aae-llp.com www.aae-llp.com	
Scale	Date 11.02.19	Drg No.	Rev.
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